TAMIL NATION

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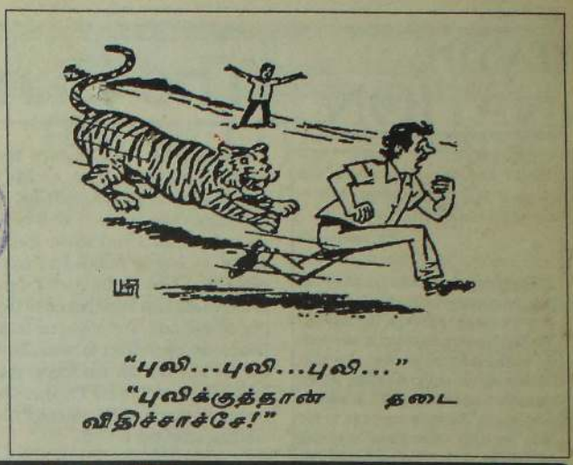

The Political Committee of the Liberation Tigers, comments on the offensive operations launched on May 28 by Sri Lanka:

"A struggle for freedom cannot be suppressed by tanks and guns"

Responding to the offensive operations launched by the Sri Lanka armed forces on May 28, the Political Committee of the Liberation Tigers, in a statement issued from the LTTE headquarters in Tamil Eelam said that these attacks served "to expose the genocidal intent of the Premadasa Government, which whilst paying lip service to the path of peace seeks, in truth, a military solution to its conflict with the Tamil people."

On June 5, India Abroad, quoted a Reuters Report which said: "At least 110 people were killed in two days of fighting between troops and Tamil rebels in the war torn north and east, military sources said on May 29. A senior army officer said 58 rebels and 11 soldiers had been killed in clashes on the rebel held Jaffna peninsula and in the Mullativu jungles to south since the military launched a two pronged offensive on May 28. In Colombo a military spokesman said 29 soldiers and 12 rebels died on May 29 in a 45 minute battle in the jungles of the Eastern province after the guerillas ambushed an army patrol. The offensive, named Operation Whirlwind came after a three month lull in fighting. Maj. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa said that the infantry, backed by Soviet made tanks, had captured 4.5 square miles of territory in Jaffna. A simultaneous attack launched toward a key rebel base in the Mullativu jungles met fierce resistance."

The text of the LTTE Political Committee statement reads:

"The offensive operations launched by the Sri Lankan armed forces in Jaffna and Mullativu serve to expose the genocidal intent of the Premadasa Government, which whilst paying lip service to the path of peace seeks, in truth, a military solution to its conflict with the Tamil people.

Over 100 Tamils have been killed and hundreds more have been maimed by indiscriminate aerial bombardment and artillery shelling of civilian population centres in the Tamil homelands - actions which are a gross violation of the humanitarian law of armed conflict.

Jet planes and T55 Chinese tanks have been deployed in these attacks - planes and tanks newly acquired by a Sri Lanka Government which goes every year to the Paris Aid Consortium, as a supplicant for foreign aid for its economic survival.

During the past year, the Premadasa Government has consistently refused to respond to the many efforts at international mediation. The most recent was the attempt made by the Swedish Government which indicated on March 6 that a first step would be for both parties to the conflict to request explicitly that Sweden shall engage itself in a peace process. Though the Liberation Tigers, in a formal letter addressed to the Swedish Foreign Ministry, welcomed this initiative, Sri Lanka failed to respond.

In recent months, the Premadasa Government has attempted to portray itself to the international community as a government that was following the path of 'consultation, compromise and consensus' and that an all party Parliamentary Select Committee on the Constitution, was the appropriate instrument to achieve that consensus. Significantly, however, neither the ruling UNP nor the opposition SLFP submitted their proposals to the Parliamentary Select Committee. Not unexpectedly, the only 'consensus' that was reached was as to how Tamil aspirations should be suppressed. And recently, the Parliamentary Select Committee process itself collapsed with the withdrawal of the opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party. The Tamil national question has become, once again, a football in the struggle for power between Sinhala political parties.

The Premadasa Government faced with mounting problems and faced with its own crisis of survival, now seeks to divert the attention of the Sinhala electorate by engaging in a military adventure against the Tamil people. It knows full well that such an offensive in dense population centres will result in heavy Tamil civilian casualties. It also knows that such an offensive may well increase the flow of Tamil refugees and asylum seekers around the world. But it seeks to rely on the efficacy of 'Tamil bashing' as the time honoured way for a Sinhala Government in distress to survive.

However, the Premadasa Government is wrong if it believes that it can suppress a struggle for freedom by tanks and guns. The soil that has drunk the blood of martyrs and innocent civilians will give no peace to the would be conqueror - it will be a quagmire for the Sri Lankan army.

The Premadasa Government's military offensive will serve only to consolidate and strengthen the will of the Tamil people to resist the Sinhala invader of their homelands - and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are the expression of that will. The actions of the Premadasa Government also serve to vindicate the stand of the Liberation Tigers that, in the context of the emerging new world order, it is international mediation that provides the path to peace, stability, and freedom in the whole island.

"The Tamil national question has become, once again, a football in the struggle for power between Sinhala political parties"

Behind India's Ban

Shilly-shallying by the Indian Government for over a year to ban the LTTE is interpreted by political analysts as being the result of a major operative factor governing Indo-Sri Lankan relations: having a leverage on Colombo via Tamil militant groups.

India's anxiety not to lose the leverage in Sri Lanka was indicated by India's Foreign Secretary and former High Commissioner, Mr Jyotindranath Dixit himself. **The Independent published in New Delhi in an analysis on April 18 quoted Mr Dixit saying "Any decision on the LTTE should not cost India in the long run'.** The paper said that "Dixit wants New Delhi not appearing to be left without any lever in Sri Lankan affairs because the Premadasa Government is itself not averse to negotiation with the Tamil Tigers." Similar opinions of RAW as well as India's Joint Intelligence Committee have been quoted in the article. Excerpts from the article follow:

"Prime Minister R V Narasimha Rao will decide on banning the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam but his aides say the political leadership will have to weigh the pros and cons properly before effecting it. The main question is how to implement the ban. The committee of secretaries met under the chairmanship of Union Home Secretary Madhav Godbole, as desired by the Prime Minister, for its final opinion on the matter. The panel decided that the decision should be left to the Prime Minister on the modalities of proscribing the outfit, taking into account all aspects since there was no unanimity of views.

The pace for a decisive political decision against the LTTE was set at the plenary session of the Congress-

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Tamils: A Nation without a State

TAMIL NATION

"Truth and knowledge are an idle gleam if they do not bring power to change the world."

Sri Aurobindo

Recognising, that to change anything it is necessary to understand that which we seek to change, the TAMIL NATION is concerned not only with providing information but also with furthering an understanding of the issues that confront the Tamil national movement. Recognising that, in the end, we truly understand anything only to the extent that we have been able to change it, the TAMIL NATION is concerned with changing those material conditions of existence which continue to oppress and discriminate against the people of Tamil Eelam. The TAMIL NATION is rooted in the growing togetherness of the Tamil people and it seeks to participate in the effort to strengthen that togetherness. The TAMIL NATION seeks to focus attention on the unjust relationship between nations without a state and nations that have attained state-hood. And, the TAMIL NATION exists to debate and campaign for the radical changes necessary, both amongst the Tamil people and outside, if the struggle of the Tamil people for national self determination is to be won.

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The Ban and the Offensive

On May 14, India banned the LTTE. Two weeks later, on May 28, Shri Lanka launched offensive operations against the Tamil people in Jaffna and Mullativu. But it would be simple minded to conclude that New Delhi and President Premadasa have begun to see eye to eye and are engaged in a joint concerted effort to annihilate the LTTE. On the contrary, the Indian ban on the LTTE was directed as much at President Premadasa as at the LTTE.

The initial question is: what did India gain by the ban? Or to put it in another way: what was it that India could do after the ban, which it could not do before the ban? During the past several months the Indian intelligence services and the CBI, not to mention the SIT, and a host of other agencies, have been more than energetic in their hunt for LTTE bases and safe houses in Tamil Nadu even without any order making the LTTE an unlawful association. New Delhi knows that such an order will do little to add to the capacity of these agencies to carry out their task.

Again, New Delhi also knows that 'banning' militancy may serve to send it further underground. In 1978, Shri Lanka banned the Liberation Tigers under the then Emergency Regulations. Five years later, in 1983, the Tigers were banned again under Shri Lanka's notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act. 14 years after the first ban and nine years after the second, Tamil militancy has not weakened but has grown stronger. A movement which consisted of tens has grown to an army of thousands. The consequences of India's ban on Tamil militancy in Tamil Nadu may not take 14 years to mature.

Why then the ban? Two reasons are apparent. The ban will make it a crime for any one in Tamil Nadu to openly, repeat, openly, support the LTTE. Though such support may now go underground, New Delhi appears to take the view that a ban will nevertheless help to stem open mass mobilisation of separatist sentiment in Tamil Nadu.

But that is not all. There is a further reason. **New Delhi seeks to use the ban to deny recognition in the international arena to the Liberation Tigers - recognition, that is, without India having a say in the matter. New Delhi seeks to exercise a veto on any attempt to settle the Tamil - Shri Lanka conflict, which sidelines India and its interests - interests which are quite plainly spelt out in the annexures to the Indo Shri Lanka 1987 Agreement.**

High Commissioner Jha was almost viceregal in an interview reported in Shri Lanka Sunday Times of May 17. He said: "The ban is a symbolic gesture with international ramifications. India's ban on the LTTE has confronted Sri Lanka with hard political realities which it will have to take into consideration before embarking on a political solution." In an earlier interview with the Shri Lanka Sunday Island, also reported on May 17, Jha was nothing, if not frank:

Q: What would India's stand be if Colombo proceeds towards a negotiated settlement with the LTTE? **A: It is naturally for the Shri Lanka Government to do whatever it thinks appropriate, but at the same time one would expect the realities of the situation to be kept in mind, whenever such a step is contemplated.**

Q: You mentioned that we should not behave as if India does not exist. Can you explain that and where we have treated India in that manner?

A: It is not an accusation, it is just advice. I would not amplify that. That would not be fair. It is not something serious. It is quite understandable. Sometimes one gets that feeling. May be my feeling is exaggerated and not an accurate one, but it is there. It is not a permanent feeling or a lasting feeling.

The glint of steel beneath the diplomatic velvet was clearly visible. The Indian ban was a signal for the Sinhala opposition including the SLFP and the Gamini-Dissanayake/Lalith Athulathmudali DUNF to campaign for Sri Lanka to follow suit. The quisling EPRLF also joined in the chorus. President Premadasa would not have been unmindful that those who were now demanding a Shri Lanka ban on the LTTE were also those who had been involved in the abortive effort to impeach him last October.

New Delhi's cuddly relationship with the SLFP goes back to the non alignment days of the early 1970s when Srimavo Bandaranaike sponsored the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal. New Delhi's relations were never quite the same with a westward looking UNP and certainly not with President Premadasa who did not even turn up for the ceremonial signing of the 1987 Indo Shri Lanka Agreement - a failure to turn up which ofcourse, may have had something to with his arch rival Gamini Dissanayake being one of chief architects of the Agreement.

New Delhi's foreign policy has stayed constant during these past several years. Non alignment, was after all, a way of increasing India's influence in a bipolar world. Today, New Delhi stays steadfast to its objective of increasing Indian influence and aspires to become one of the big powers of the emerging multipolar world. High Commissioner Jha gave some indication of this when he said:

"There are many items that have come straightaway into focus almost simultaneously ... Question of India-US relationship, non proliferation treaty, now this rocket deal, the breaking of the Soviet Union, India's entry into West Asia peace talks, the India-Pakistan relations and Afghanistan situation."

The Indian Ambassador to the US remarked recently in the context of a Gorbachev speech suggesting a place for India on the Security Council that "...considering India's role in global peace and demilitarisation, it was necessary that 800 million people should get a share in decision making "

Again, at the level of the Indian region, if in the 1980s, India used the Tamil militant movement to destabilise Colombo so that Colombo may move closer to the Indian orbit, the ban on the LTTE suggests that New Delhi believes that it has now found alternative channels within the Sinhala polity through which it may secure a Colombo government which is more responsive to India's foreign policy objectives.

All this would not have been lost on President Premadasa. He was quick to reject the demands by the SLFP and the other opposition groups for a ban on the LTTE. President Premadasa was not about to commit hara kiri. And, ofcourse, he had his own agenda.

Ven. Madampagama Assaji Thera, the Secretary of the Buddhist Monks delegation to Jaffna, said on May 24 : "**It is too early to say** whether the (Indian) ban would help Shri Lanka or not. But one thing we have to understand is that it was not done to help Shri Lanka. Banning the LTTE **at this stage** will definitely hamper peace efforts." The Sri Lankan state controlled Sunday Observer was even more specific in its editorial on May 24: "It is best that the Select Committee be allowed to complete its deliberations. **Perhaps a decision to ban or not can be taken after the Select Committee has exhausted all its avenues."**

The Premadasa tactic was clear. Do not ban, but use the situation created by the Indian ban, to pressure the LTTE and achieve a 'consensus' solution to the conflict in the Northeast through the Parliamentary Select Committee mechanism. The 'Select Committee Line' was the one which President Premadasa and his Advisers have been peddling for sometime now in international fora. This search for 'consultation, compromise and consensus' through the Select Committee mechanism was Shri Lanka's justification for rejecting any suggestion for international mediation.

But, the SLFP, which lays claims to be the true leader of the Sinhala people, was clearly unwilling to go along with the Premadasa 'Select Committee' agenda, if that meant perpetuating President Premadasa in power. The issues concerning the Udugampola affidavits and the Election Commissioners findings had been fermenting for sometime now. The SLFP pulled the rug from under President Premadasa's feet by calling for an immediate Parliamentary debate on the Udugampola affidavits and when this was not granted, withdrawing from the Parliamentary Select Committee on the ground of the Government's contempt for Parliament.

With the Parliamentary Select Committee option under attack, and with the opposition crying out vociferously for an LTTE ban and an investigation into the Udugampola allegations, President Premadasa turned to a military adventure in the Tamil homelands as the way out of the impasse. It was the time honoured way for a Sinhala government in distress to survive.

And, here, the words of the LTTE statement on the front page of this issue of the Tamil Nation, are apposite:

"The Tamil national question has become once again, a football in the struggle for power between Sinhala political parties. However, the Premadasa Government is wrong if it believes that it can suppress a struggle for freedom by tanks and guns. The soil that has drunk the blood of martyrs and innocent civilians will give no peace to the would be conqueror - it will be a quagmire for the Shri Lankan army. "

Again ,whilst it is true that due heed should be paid to Mr.Jha's 'advice' that no one should behave as if India does not exist it is also equally true, as a diplomat in Washington once remarked, "India is not a super power - and it should not try to behave as one." And, perhaps, even more fundamentally, and importantly, New Delhi should learn to recognise the aspirations of the separate nations of the Indian subcontinent and not behave as if these national formations do not exist - or for that matter can be destroyed.

Tamil Weekly Ranee's view on the Tiger Ban

But does Chief Minister Jayalalitha really have the clout?

The struggle of the Tamil people for freedom is taking place under conditions of severe hardship within the matrix of the power balances in the world, and in particular the Indian region. It was Mao Tse Tung who once said that a liberation struggle was no tea party. To those engaged in the university of the Tamil national struggle on the ground, that which is sometimes said in the comfortable lounges of certain Tamil expatriate circles may well appear as coming from the kindergarten.

That Velupillai Prabhakaran and the Liberation Tigers have taken the struggle of the people of Tamil Eelam forward to the extent that they have is a tribute (to use the words of two Indian Generals who fought against the LTTE) to their "incredible motivation and magnificent fighting prowess" and their "discipline, dedication, determination, motivation and technical expertise". **Recent events serve to vindicate the stand of the Liberation Tigers that, in the context of the emerging new world order, it is international mediation that will provide the path to peace, stability, and freedom in the whole island.**

Savitri

Liberation Tigers meet Buddhist Monks Peace Delegation in Jaffna

A representative delegation of Buddhist monks led by the Ven. Balapitiye Siri Siddaththa Maha Nayaka Thera with the Ven. Madampagama Assaji Thera as Secretary visited Jaffna in April.

Amongst the others in the Delegation were Ven. Prof. Pallakande Rathanasara Thera, Ven. Ratgama Sudewa Thera, Ven. Balapitiye Rathnasiri Thera, Ven. Idigastuduwe Suddantha Thera, Ven. Rathgama Thilskasiri Thera, Ven. Kithulwala Assaji Thera, Ven. Ederamulle Dhammika Thera and Ven. Vijayapura Mahanama Thera. **Picture shows the delegation meeting with LTTE Political Adviser, Mr.Anton Balasingham.**

According to the Sri Lanka Sunday Times the Buddhist delegation when it returned from Jaffna after meeting LTTE leaders expressed optimism that a political solution could be worked out. The leader of the delegation, Ven. Balapitiya Siri Siddhaththa Mahanayaka Thero told the Sunday Times that LTTE theoretician Anton Balasingham had said negotiations could take place and they were ready for a genuine solution. He quoted Mr. Balasingham as saying, "our doors are open for peace. We are for negotiations and for a genuine ceasefire." Mr. Balasingham said the LTTE had not been weakened but was calling for a ceasefire as it was essential for a political dialogue, the Mahanayake said.

Buddhist delegation sources said they had put forward ten proposals and made three requests to LTTE leaders but the LTTE had said the proposals fell short of their aspirations.

The LTTE put forward two counter proposals to the Buddhist delegation. They proposed the recognition of the North and East as the traditional homeland of the Tamil-speaking people, and a permanent merger of the two provinces.

The ten proposals of the Buddhist delegation included: The protection of the unitary status of Sri Lanka and unity among communities; devolution of powers through regional bodies; merger of the two provinces with the consent of the people of the Eastern province obtained at a referendum; powers for the regional council to obtain foreign aid without increasing the debt burden of the central government; a separate unit of Rupavahini and the SLBC in the North-Eastern regional body; regional police unit; and the establishment of a second chamber in parliament (Senate) comprising representatives from the regional bodies.

Mr. Anton Balasingham, Mahaththaya, Yogaratnam Yogi, Mrs Adele Balasingham, Baby Subramanium and Ms. Jeya, leader of the LTTE Women's Cadres were among those present at the talks.

...and the LTTE Political Committee responds to the 'Peace Proposals'...

The Political Committee of the Liberation Tigers responded to the Delegation's Peace Proposals by a letter dated 24 April which said:

"On behalf of the Tamil people, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam wish to express their appreciation for the mission of peace and goodwill undertaken by you amidst obstacles and opposition in the South. While we praise your bold decision to visit Jaffna, we fervently hope that your mission may open the doors of understanding, goodwill and peace between the two nations.

It is very sad and tragic to note that the wider sections of the Sinhala masses have failed to grasp the basic issues underlying the national struggle of the Tamils, though the conflict has a prolonged history extending to more than four decades. Furthermore, the historical origin of the armed struggle, its emergence as a legitimate mode of a political struggle, is also totally misconceived.

It is a tragic irony that Buddhism, which advocated a profound ethical philosophy of humanism and compassion, which stands for an egalitarian society based on social justice, has given rise to reactionary chauvinistic ideological formations which has entered into political discourse and resulting in various forms of oppressive and discriminatory policies against the Tamils. One has to reflect, very deeply, as to how, and why, this politics of violence, oppression and inhumanism has arisen in a society that has for more than two thousand years pursued the spiritual path of the Noble One, the enlightened Buddha.

We wish to emphasis that the armed struggle of the Tamils was the direct product of state oppression and violence.

We took up to arms to defend our right to existence when decades of non-violent struggle had been systematically crushed by the armed violence of the State, when we had no alternative other than to protect ourselves from State persecution and genocide. As an oppressed people faced with an ever mounting State repression we have the right to defend our selves. Therefore, our armed resistance is legitimate and necessary.

The LTTE is not a terrorist organisation bent on irrational violence. We are a liberation organisation fighting for the political rights of our oppressed people. Our armed struggle is a mode of a political struggle charted with specific political aims and objectives.

Understanding the LTTE in this perspective is crucial and fundamental to the comprehension of the ethnic conflict and the national struggle of the Tamil people.

We are very sad and distressed to note that there is a total lack of understanding among wide sections of the Sinhala masses of the nature and structure of the LTTE, its aims and objectives and the cause for which it is fighting. The politicians, the clergy and the media in the South characterise the armed struggle of the Tamils as none other than blatant terrorism and brand the LTTE as a bunch of terrorists, anarchists and fanatics. Such distorted perceptions, based on false premises, will always be a stumbling block to a proper understanding of the national conflict and to the resolution of that conflict.

"The LTTE is not a terrorist organisation bent on irrational violence. Our armed struggle is a mode of a political struggle charted with specific political aims and objectives."

We should make it absolutely clear that the problems of the Tamil people is a national problem and their political struggle is a national struggle based on the right to national self-determination. This struggle for self-determination has evolved through several decades of concrete historical conditions. That the Tamil people constitute a distinct nationality and that they have a historically given homeland with a geographically contiguous well defined territory are indisputable facts. Therefore, we are firmly committed to the view that any meaningful solution to the Tamil national question should be based on the recognition of the Tamils as a national formation with an inalienable right to a homeland and to self-determination. These were the basic principles enunciated at Thimpu talks.

The LTTE will consider favourably a political framework which addresses these basic set of principles that underlie the national problem. But so far the Sinhalese ruling elite has persistently refused to recognise the Tamil problem as a nationality ques-

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India Abroad Interviews LTTE Central Committee Member Lawrence Thilagar

"Ban on LTTE an Indian war on Indian people"

A spokesman for the Liberation tigers of Tamil Eelam called New Delhi's ban on the LTTE an 'Indian war on Indian people'. The spokesman, Lawrence Thilagar told India Abroad on the telephone from the LTTE office in Paris that 'India will be the loser' for its ban. Tiger operations, he said, will not be affected by it. 'We have stopped using India as a base for some time now' he said. The main suppliers of arms to the LTTE, he asserted, 'is the demoralised Sri Lankan Army'.

Police sources here (in London) say that support for the LTTE has grown among Sri Lankan Tamils in Britain in the year since the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. "Tamils here realise there is nobody to fall back on" a leader of the Sri Lankan Tamil community here said. 'Now that we have lost Indian support, everybody believes Tamils in Sri Lanka would be wiped out without the LTTE." The community leader who asked not to be identified, said that there had been a perceptible shift of support from other Tamil groups to the LTTE and that 'support for the Tigers abroad is a sign of increased support for them in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka will not ban the LTTE despite an Indian ban on the Tamil militant organisation, official sources said. A senior official said President Ranasinghe Premadasa wanted to keep the doors open for any possible future negotiations with the LTTE and the government decided that a ban on the LTTE would hamper any possible future negotiations. Meanwhile the opposition parties continued their campaign demanding the ban on the LTTE. The Central Committee of the (opposition) Sri Lanka Freedom Party adopted a resolution calling for an immediate ban on the LTTE. Most of the political analysts and diplomatic sources in Colombo believe that the ban would not have any impact on the LTTE's dominant position in the North. *(Courtesy: India Abroad 29 May)*

Select Committee Process collapses with SLFP withdrawal

During end May, the main Sinhala opposition party, the SLFP, withdrew from the Parliamentary Select Committee citing as one of the reasons the failure of the Premadasa government to allow a full Parliamentary debate on the Udugampola allegations of government patronage for 'death squads'. The much trumpeted Parliamentary Select Committee fell a victim to the struggle for power between opposing Sinhala political parties. It was not an unexpected demise.

The SLFP withdrawal had the Tamil quisling groups squealing in fear. Shankar Rajee, a spokesman for the quisling EROS group in Colombo said the SLFP's boycott would only strengthen the position of the LTTE and the Tamil people would be 'forced to find their own liberation through a separate state.' Words of wisdom indeed from a group which supposedly fought for Tamil liberation for so many years. Dharmalingam Siddharthan from quisling PLOTE went one better and 'pleaded with the SLFP to reconsider its decision' and warned that 'a stubborn attitude would precipitate a separate state.'! Words of advice, no doubt, from an organisation which continues to call itself the 'Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam'. Quisling TELO's N.Srikanth whose party works for the Government security forces in the Northeast, accused 'the SLFP of boosting the LTTE by withdrawing from the Parliamentary Select Committee.'

Minister Thondaman, however, was much more circumspect. He declined any direct comment on the SLP move but said that if the parties fail to find a political solution, the LTTE's stand might prevail. Mr. Thondaman said not only the SLFP, but that the other political parties were also responsible for the present deadlock and no one seemed to have learnt from the disastrous mistakes of the past.

Early in May, the LTTE turned down an invitation by the Parliamentary Select Committee to submit proposals, on the grounds that the UNP and the SLFP have not submitted their proposals.. LTTE spokesman Mr. Anton Balasingham conveyed the LTTE's stand to the Select Committee after the Government authorities offered security and state facilities to LTTE members if they came to Colombo to submit their proposals. **The LTTE had instead invited members of the Parliamentary Select Committee to visit Jaffna for talks, well-informed sources said.**

The Triumph of Self Determination
The March of History

The Tamils Quest for Statehood
in the context of the birth of new states in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia

by

Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran

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Colonisation continues

According to reports from Trincomalee, steps have already been undertaken by the GA Trincomalee to settle Sinhalese families in the six Tamil villages of Upparu, Palam-pottaru, Ralkuli, Alankerny, Kanniyai and Eechantivu.In the meantime, the MP for Batticaloa, Mr Prince Casinader has complained to the Government Agent Batticaloa that the houses vacated by the Tamils around the army camp at Kalkudali is being settled with Sinhalese families with the help of the Sri Lankan Army.

From the War Front

Attack on Kokkuwelli Army Camp

A report released by the Sri Lankan Security Forces states that on 4th May, the LTTE launched an attack on the Sri Lankan Army Camp at Kokkuwelli in the Vavuniya district. A fierce battle ensued between the Tigers and the Sri Lankan Army. Four army men were killed and seven soldiers were seriously wounded.

U-shaped ambush

According to seasoned Sri Lankan army officers, some of the tactics of the Tigers in the East cannot be found in any theory books on war, and are examples of LTTE innovations. The U-shaped ambush which many an army unit has fallen prey to, is virtually impossible to escape from. Theoretically such an ambush cannot be successful because two sections of the ambush party would be exposed to each others' fire. But the Tigers avoid such crossfire by careful planning in which the attackers occupying the two long sides of the U take cover behind gunny bags or just a fold in the ground and are given controlled arcs of fire. They draw the army men into the ambush and then bring down the fire from all three sides. They first open fire from the front. When we run to the left, we come under fire from that direction. When we turn to the right, again we are exposed to fire. Such an ambush is devastating to a concentrated group of soldiers. The only way to survive is to have a broad front and avoid the ambush.

ICRC requests release of Sri Lankan army commanders

21 Sri Lankan army commanders who were reported missing after the disastrous beach landing at Mullaitivu last year are believed to be held by the LTTE in Jaffna. Mr Pierre Wettach, the ICRC chief in Sri Lanka is negotiating with the LTTE for the release of these commanders.

Changes in the command structure of the Sri Lankan armed forces

Differences of opinion within the Sri Lankan military on the conduct of the Eelam war have spilled out into the open for the first time, with the change in the Security Forces Command and Control system under which the service chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Police take over from the Joint Operations Command (JOC), the planning and execution of the operation against the Tigers. The JOC has now been relegated to an advisory role, although it is still under President Premadasa. President Premadasa who is the Commander-in-Chief of the Sri Lankan armed forces is believed to have made these changes because he felt that the JOC was not doing as well as it should have and that now expects the service commanders to do better. One example they give is the situation in the East, where despite repeated assurances of efforts to clear the region of the LTTE, the Tigers still manage to stage regular ambushes with spectacular results, as far as Sri Lankan army casualties are concerned. The critics also point towards Jaffna, which is still beyond the military's grasp, almost two years after the second phase of the Eelam war, despite numerous stories of an imminent invasion.

Underlying the recent changes in the command structure are differences of opinion among senior officers, personality clashes, perceptions of injustices, discrimination and favouritism which have bred resentment and led to the emergence of factions within the military. Some sources talk of possible mass resignations of officers, unhappy at the way things are going and the possibility of troop morale being affected. The changes reflect a split in the Army which until now appeared a monolithic institution.

Losses for the Sri Lankan Army

In the three month period from January 1st to March 31st 1992, the Sri Lankan armed forces have received several setbacks at the hands of the LTTE.The LTTE carried out nearly fifty separate attacks ion the Sri Lankan troops at various places in the North East. During this period the LTTE destroyed 35 sentry points of the Sri Lankan army and also killed about 450 army personnel. They also destroyed seven armoured vehicles and recovered a large number of weapons and ammunitions. The weapons and ammunitions so far recovered is over double the quantity recovered by the LTTE from the Sri Lankan forces during the previous three months period at the end of last year.

Abduction in Valaichenai

An elderly person, six children and six girls from Valaichenai Hindu College were kidnapped by Muslim Home Guards on 29th April. Their whereabouts are still unknown. One of the children who ran away from the captors had stab wounds and other injuries. The child, a boy, says that Muslim Home Guards abducted him and the others when they were out to fetch firewood in the forest around Valaichenai paper factory. While they were being driven towards Kawatha-munnai, he managed to break free and ran back.

GOGGLES

by C.P.Goliard

The Tiger Ban

On May 16th, I read the Associated Press news report from New Delhi that the India's Home Minister Shankar Rao Bhaorao Chavan had announced in the Indian Parliament, a ban against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, saying "the group posed a threat to India's sovereignty".

The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Jayaram Jayalalitha, has been quoted as saying that, "the ban has saved India, specially Tamil Nadu from a catastrophe".

To these pompous utterances of two power-holding politicians, I can reply that the LTTE is not the first organization to be banned in India. Almost 50 years ago (to be exact, on June 22, 1942), the then ruling British authorities in India, declared the 'Forward Bloc' organization of Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945) as unlawful. Now, Subhas Chandra Bose, whose reputation is second only to Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru in the Indian freedom struggle, is recognized all over India as a pioneer fighter to the cause of liberty.

Subhas Chandra Bose, also known as the 'Bengal Tiger', was elected as the President of the Indian Congress in Jan. 1938. He was re-elected to the same post in Jan. 1939, though Mahatma Gandhi preferred the election of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, and pleaded with Bose to withdraw in favour of Sitaramayya. In April 1939, Bose resigned his position as the President of the Indian Congress and founded the Forward Bloc in May 1939. In July 1940, he was arrested by the ruling authorities on a charge of sedition and confined to his house to await trial. Bose escaped from confinement and via Afghanistan and Russia, moved to Berlin in March 1941. While in Berlin, he set up the Azad Hind Army and troubled the then ruling authorities of India in many ways.

One of the radio messages delivered by Bose, to his supporters in India, was entitled, "guerilla war and plan of action". It has been preserved for posterity by George Orwell, who worked full-time at the BBC as a war correspondent from Aug. 1941 to Nov. 1943. George Orwell (or probably the BBC) had classified Subhas Chandra Bose's radio messages, emanating from Berlin, as "Axis propaganda broadcasts". In his Sept. 4, 1942 radio message on guerrilla war, the Bengal Tiger greeted the fellow indians as follows:

"Friends, I want to congratulate you most heartily on your achievements this fortnight...Your achievements have taken the enemy by surprise, and outwitted them completely... If we are forewarned we shall be forearmed, and if we are forearmed our success is guaranteed....Since our final victory will not come as a result of our effort alone, it does not matter in the least if we in India meet with temporary setbacks when confronted with machine guns, bombs, tanks and aeroplanes. Our strategy should consist in sticking to our guns and continuing the campaign in spite of all obstacles and setbacks..." (George Orwell, The War Commentaries, first published in 1985).

Fifty years ago, the then ruling authorities of India outlawed Subhas Chandra Bose's organization. They though it as the prudent act. But they could not prevent the message of Bengal Tiger reaching the minds of his supporters in India. History has proved whose message finally won in the ultimate battle for the minds.

One can state that Prabhakaran is placed in the same position now, that Subhas Chandra Bose faced 50 years ago. Though Prabhakaran is now pursued by the India authorities under the pretext of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, the real fact is, he is being harassed for inflicting a humiliating defeat on the Indian army, which was sent to Eelam by Rajiv Gandhi in 1987.

In my opinion, the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi resembles the Rashomon story of Japanese novelist Ryunosuke Akutagawa, which was popularized internationally by the movie director Akira Kurosawa. Rajiv Gandhi symbolizes the murdered samurai Takehiko and Prabhakaran is portrayed by the Indian authorities as the robber Tajomaru. The truth however will be as elusive as the Rashomon story. (It needs mention that veena maestro S Balachandar did adopt the Rashomon story into a Tamil movie named, "Antha Naal", starring Sivaji Ganesan. It was billed as the "first Tamil movie without any songs". Obviously, that bold experiment by the master musician did not succeed in box-office.)

The May 31st issue of the India Today magazine reported how Prabhakaran's involvement in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination has been traced by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in India. "According to the charge-sheet, the plan to eliminate the former prime minister was conceived by LTTE supremo, V Pirabhakaran, in 1986 when he was detained at Tamil Nadu House in New Delhi before the start of the SAARC summit. A telephone conversation between Pirabhakaran and Anton Balasingham, his political adviser in Madras, which was taped by the Intelligence Bureau recorded his angry outbursts against Rajiv Gandhi who, he said, should be 'fixed' once he gets out of Indian soil."

What a flimsy piece of evidence for the motive attributed to Prabhakaran's grouse against Rajiv? If the Intelligence Bureau had tapped the telephone calls of all the politicians opposed to Rajiv Gandhi from Kashmir to Kerala, they would have received adequate "angry outbursts against Rajiv Gandhi".

During the last few years, convincing evidences have been revealed for Ronald Reagan's action to eliminate Muammar Qaddafi of Libya, and George Bush's order to "neutralize" Saddam Hussein of Iraq. But, Libya and Iraq have not issued the charge sheets to the American presidents. Is it because the investigators in these two countries are not as foolish as the SIT personnel in India?

Prospecting for oil in the North

Seismic surveys carried out by the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) indicate good prospects for oil exploration in the Northern and North Western areas. According to the Chairman of the CPC, Mr Talpahewa, India and Norway had sent in proposals for oil exploration in the off shore areas of the Northern and North Western waters. The Norwegian party has shown interest in the North West while Indian Oil and Natural Gas Corporation has sent in proposals for oil exploration in the Northern Waters.

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LTTE May Day Rally in Jaffna

On 1st May, the Liberation Tigers organised a well attended May Day rally in Jaffna. A procession of several thousand people, carrying banners and placards depicting the history of the Eelam liberation movement, the economic resources in the North and their development, started marching from Maruthanamadam. They reached the Jaffna University grounds where they held a mass meeting. Among the many speakers, was Mr V Balakumar, the leader of the EROS group in Jaffna.

Peoples Front of the Liberation Tigers Marches in Switzerland

The Swiss Branch of the Peoples Front of the Liberation Tigers organised Demonstration Marches in Zurich and in Geneva on May Day. Hundreds of Tamils joined in the Zurich march which commenced at 10 a.m. from near the Zurich Railway Station. In Geneva the march commenced around 2 p.m. from the Geneva city centre. Women's organisations as well as Turkish, Kurdish, Spanish, Italian and Lebanese organisations participated in the demonstration. The public meeting at the end of the march in Zurich was addressed by several representatives of the participating organisations. The PFLT Organising Secretary for Switzerland addressing the meeting said: "It is a matter of urgent importance that in whatever part of the world that Tamils may live, we should give our unstinted support for the liberation struggle that is being waged in our homeland." The main slogans were: "The International Community: Recognise the Tamil people's Right to Self Determination" and "Sri Lanka Army: Stop Genocide of Tamils in the NorthEast" *Picture shows a section of the marchers in Zurich.*

Ashwani Talwar writes in the Times of India

Civilian houses hit, LTTE camps missed

In March the Sri Lankan military made triumphant statement in Colombo. Their force had attacked one of LTTE's best known camps in Jaffna - on Ramakrishna Road in Kondavil - and destroyed two of the four buildings in the premises. A visit to Jaffna last week revealed that the defence ministry was stretching the truth - by some 100 metres.

That is about the difference between what the air force had been aiming for and what it hit. The camp remains intact. The bombs fell on a civilian house on another street, destroying it and slightly damaging the one next door. Six of the seven-member family of Mr S K Nirmal Kumar scrambled into the bunker in the garden, a common feature in Jaffna houses. A 13-year-old daughter could not make it, but also escaped unhurt. The family has now moved into the neighbouring house, belonging to a relative.

The location of the Kondavil camp is public knowledge. When the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government were talking, senior officials visited the place. Journalists go there as a matter of routine on trips to Jaffna. Perhaps this was the reason, the air force had avoided taking it on as a target: Despite a martyr's column in the compound makes it easy to spot from the air.

In the press-briefing several days after the March 8 attack at Kondavil, the spokesman made some fuss about the better intelligence they had now begun gathering about the LTTE in Jaffna. The camp was targeted after it had been "confirmed" it was no longer being used by the civilians. This does not seem to be totally accurate. This reporter saw about 20 people in the camp who looked civilian: They wore no uniforms and were in the wrong age-group to be combatants. They were in the camp's waiting area and some leafed through Colombo newspapers.

The military said it attacked the place around 10.00am after learning that two important LTTE leaders would be coming there. The wanted men, including the LTTE military leader for Jaffna, however, fled in time to a bunker, the spokesman said.But the raid was not a total waste. According to army intelligence passed down to reporters, three militants died and eight were injured.But at the place where the bomb actually fell, a different casualty count is available. There were no deaths, but two passers by were injured. A wounded goat also limped around the place. But nobody is thanking the fir force for the low casualties.

In another air force action at Vadamarachchi spread over three days last year, scores of houses and public places were damaged. Artillery shelling from army camps around the coast of the peninsula seem to worry Jaffna residents more. A week before the Kondavil incident, a single shell fired from an army base several kilometres away reportedly killed five members of a family in their sleep in Araly, close to Jaffna town. Aircraft give a longer warning, allowing people to take cover. But civilians come off worse than the Tamil Tigers who are supposed to be the targets. A government official says some months ago he saw aircraft missing an LTTE store after five or six attempts and damaging houses around the target. He narrates a familiar Jaffna joke. When the air force attacks an LTTE camp, the safest place to take cover is the camp itself.

May Day Message from Velupillai Prabakharan, leader of the Liberation Tigers

The following are excerpts from the translated text of the message given by Mr V Prabhakaran, the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on the occasion of May Day, 1992

"Today is Worker's Day, a day that marks the revolutionary resurgence and the spirit of solidarity among the working people of the world.

Human existence depends on the productive capacity of the labouring masses. Through labour, human beings create the material world, the social world.

Today we celebrate the glory of the working people. We celebrate this day amidst the conditions of war, at a critical time when the enemy forces are poised for major offensive operations, at a crucial time when we face the mounting pressures of the economic embargo imposed on our people.

Our working people are facing a life and death struggle as a direct consequence of the ruthless policy adopted by the racist Sri Lankan state - a state has unleashed a ruthless economic war against our people.

The strategy of the Sinhalese elite is to strangle and paralyse the economic production of our homeland with the ulterior motive of destroying the will power and determination of our people. This is a common strategy adopted by all oppressors in all times and in all countries. Our enemy too, has been adopting a similar strategy. The tragic consequence of such a policy and the profound suffering faced by our people cannot be described by words.

I salute our people for their resolution in facing the stormy winds of State repression with the strength of a mountain. I salute our people for their commitment, for their dedication to the cause and for their passion for a life of freedom and dignity, transcending a tragic condition of death, destruction and starvation.

Our journey towards liberation continues along a most difficult path. The enemy can create more obstacles, more impediments along that path to demoralise us. Whatever the obstacles and difficulties there may be, as long as we have faith in our objectives and a fierce determination built on that faith, and a firm sense of freedom that arises out of that determination, we will succeed in reaching our destination of liberation.

Triple Anniversary of a Priest for all Seasons

Rt. Rev. Dr. Bastiampillai Deogupillai

For over two centuries, the Catholic Church in Ceylon was attached to the dioceses of Goa and Cochin in India. In 1834, the Pope made it an Apostolic Vicariate and 3 years later, there were two Vicariates: one in Colombo and one in Jaffna. **Rt. Rev. Dr. Deogupillai is the sixth in line and the second indigenous Bishop of the diocese of Jaffna.** After completing his secondary education with excellent grades, he proceeded to Propaganda Fidei College in Rome to prepare for the priesthood. He returned to his homeland in 1942, after completing his religious studies and being ordained a priest. For a while, he served ads an Assistant Parish Priest in St. Mary's Cathedral, Jaffna and taught Apologetics in St. Patrick's College and Holy Family Convent, Jaffna. Being an educationalist, he held the post of Rector in St. Joseph's, Amuradhapura, (1946-1951) Sacred Heart College, Karaveddy (1951-1953), St. Henry's Ilavalai (1954-1956) and Head of Columbuthurai Teacher Training College (1956-62).

He was chosen as Bishop of Batticaloa, and served in this capacity until 1967, when he was appointed Bishop of Jaffna, to succeed Bishop Emilianus Pillai. A man of unswerving faith in God, he was fearless in the face of great trials and troubles. Under his leadership, the Jaffna diocese grew from strength to strength. He created several new parishes (so that priests had closer touch with parishioners) and was the founder and co-ordinator of many institutions and auxiliary groups. Among his many achievements are the formation of the Bishopric of Mannar and the inauguration of the New Seminary in Jaffna for the training of future generations of Tamil priests.

He is a very gifted man; he has the ability and foresight to understand grievous problems and supply simple solutions with great ease. He possesses an immense wealth of sympathy, charity and compassion not only for his Catholic Tamils but for Tamils of all faiths. **He was revered as a leader by people of various religious beliefs - a Man for all seasons for all Tamils.**

Two facets of his calm, dignified manner are his sense of justice and knowledge and love of history both attributes he used to the full as mediator, judge and historian during the past 15 years of strife, stress and sorrow in the North and East of Shri Lanka. He was never afraid to speak out in defence of truth and against injustice. Everyone who approached him with their problems received a patient hearing and practical advice, and returned being satisfied that he was fair and forthright in his deliberations and actions.

A man of firm, unshaken trust in God, he was very courageous ; even when the Bishop's House was partly destroyed by the Shri Lankan Army bombing and shelling, and his priests suggested he move to a place of safety, he refused and remained in Jaffna, where he said he truly belonged - close to his parishioners in times of trial, where they too were in danger.

His tall frame, dignified stance, quiet manner and honest speech enhanced his office as Bishop in a very difficult period of Shri Lankan and particularly jaffna history. All acknowledged his leadership and he was both a tower of strength - to those distraught by the ethnic violence and a beacon of light beckoning the paths to alienate their burden and live in peace and harmony with all. Through the many agencies and groups working in the North he helped to relieve the mental, physical sufferings and material needs of the entire community. This caring side of Bishop Deogupillai will long be remembered by thousands whom he helped to make a new start in life.

This year on 11th May, the people of Jaffna, celebrated his triple anniversary: 25 years as Bishop of Jaffna, 50 years as a priest and, having reached 75 years of age. Bishops have to retire at 75 and on the eve of his retirement, at a three day celebration in his honour, he laid the foundation stone for his cherished venture - the New Seminary in Jaffna. A special modern version of Seevaka Chiathamani, one of the five great Tamil literary works was performed in the presence of a large gathering.

His Holiness, Pope John Paul 11 sent a personal letter of congratulation and appreciation to Bishop Deogupillai. He praised him for his 50 years of pastoral service as a zealous priest and a caring Bishop and also an excellent example to all people. His strong faith, justice and adherence steadfastly to principle, tempered with tender compassion for the people of Jaffna in these years of incessant fighting were commended. Pope John Paul said he was very aware of the acute sufferings of the people as a result of the internal crisis in Shri Lanka and that he shared their sorrows - "Though separated by many miles" he added "Reverend Brother, we rejoice and give thanks to God for His gifts to you and for the progress the Church in Jaffna has made during your office as Bishop. We share your joy today and participate in mind and spirit in your Golden Jubilee celebrations. We beg God to grant you abundant blessings in the future and He will reward you for your years of faithful, caring service. We give you, the clergy and all the people of your diocese our Apostolic Blessing." We, the Catholic Tamils living in the UK add our prayers and felicitations to our dear Father - Bishop Deogupillai, and extend our loyalty and obedience to the New Bishop Elect. *(R.E.)*

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We publish here the second instalment of a revised version of a paper which Subramaniam Sivanayagam, the Founding Editor of the Tamil Nation presented at a Seminar in Madras in March 1991, organised by the Centre for South and South East Asian Studies. That the writer of the paper should now be languishing in an Indian jail, charged with no offence and detained without trial, must surely speak volumes about the rule of law and freedom of expression in India today

Rise of Tamil Militancy

From the First Instalment which appeared in the May issue of the Tamil Nation: ***"Tamil youth militancy was a recent phenomenon, a surprising one, when viewed from a sociological point of view, because it seemed out of character with the society that bred it....given the political backdrop of a decade and a half of Sinhala discrimination, mob attacks, pinpricks through the Press, the collective humiliation of a whole community which had made a contribution to the progress of the country well above its numerical strength, and the deprivation of a sense of belonging of a people who were born and bred there for centuries, something had to give way at some point of time...While the indigenous Tamils themselves had begun to wilt under the pressures of Sinhala-Buddhist oppression beginning 1956, it took a second generation of post-independence Tamil youths to think of violence as the only answer to unchecked majority violence. As they say in common parlance, the worm began to turn.'***

There is a common temptation in India and elsewhere to trace the orgy of violence that Sri Lanka has been going through these past many years to the onset of Tamil militancy and what is termed as Tamil separatism. Behind that assumption lies not only an absence of awareness of the past history of the island and its peoples, both before independence and after, but also a conceptual confusion in mixing the consequence with the cause.

The cycle of violence certainly got intensified as a result of the Tamil armed resistance and the struggle for self-determination; which should not be surprising when the State itself becomes a partisan to the conflict, and is engaged in bombing and straffing parts of the country which it claims to be its own territory. This is a horrendous happening not heard of either in India or in many other countries where divisive forces are fighting for separation.

In fact, violence in thought, word and deed has been a part of Sinhala consciousness from the time they trace their 2,500 years of history in the island. The Mahavamsa, a Pali chronicle believed to have been written in the sixth century A.D. which is History, Mythology, Bible and Bhagavad Gita all rolled into one in the eyes of Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism, sanctions killing of Tamils! It would be interesting to see how the authors of the Mahavamsa saw the end of the rule of the Tamil King Allalan (Elara) who ascended the throne in 145 B.C. and who, in the words of the chroniclers themselves, ruled the island for forty four years "with even justice towards friend and foe on occasions of disputes at law". The Tamil ruler might have been the symbol of justice and fair-play, but the traditional hero in the Sinhala consciousness is the man who killed him! - Prince Gamani, or Dutugemunu, called such because of his wickedness. (Even quite recently President Premadasa unveiled a statue of Dutugemunu in Anuradhapura.) Dutugemunu's triumph over the Tamil king and the slaying of the latter in single combat remains to this day as the one historical event that is embedded in the Sinhala psyche. Says the Mahavamsa: "When he (Gamani) had slain all the Damilas (Tamils), he went up to the terrace of the palace ... looking back upon his glorious victory, great though it was, knew no joy, remembering was wrought the destruction of millions (of beings)."

The Mahavamsa goes on to say how while Gamani was touched by remorse by the slaughter of Tamils, eight "arahants" flew through the air from India to comfort him. You have killed only one and a half human beings, they told him. "The one had come into the (three) refuges, the other had taken on himself the five (Buddhist) precepts. Unbelievers and men of evil were the rest, not more to be esteemed that beasts". The "great king took fort" by these words, says the Mahavamsa.

When the leaders of predominantly Hindu India opted for the Asoka Chakra with its Buddhist connotation of Peace as the national emblem at the time of independence, the Buddhist leaders of Sri Lanka who claim that the island is the first and final repository of Buddhism, Ahimsa and Maithria, decided to make a ferocious-looking lion holding a sword on its paw, as their flag and emblem! Historically speaking, one wonders whether the Tamil Tiger was a late starter in life!

men's agreements with Sinhala leaders, all of which were dishonoured. In short, the Tamils had over those twenty years exhausted all the peaceful options .open to an oppressed minority. Unlike Jinnah in India, they placed their trust in the majority community at the time of independence, and that trust was betrayed. And if after twenty years of absolute and complete disillusionment, an ever-worsening diminution of Tamil dignity and self-respect, with job opportunities for the Tamils diminishing every year and Sinhala forced down their throats, a blank wall looming larger and larger before their growing generation, and threats to life and limb adding to their tensions and worries, if after all these, the Tamils decided to set up their own independent homeland in the arid, government-neglected, undeveloped north and east where they were traditionally settled for centuries, what are you griping about Mr.Corea?...

"Your predecessor in the editorial chair of the Ceylon Observer, Tarzie Vittachi, a Sinhalese himself, with larger human concerns over-riding his own ethnic identity wrote this as far back as 1958: "What are we left with? A nation in ruins, some grim lessons which we cannot afford to forget, and a momentous question have the Sinhalese and the Tamils reached the parting of the ways? That was twenty years ago, Mr. Corea. If at the end of the inhuman atrocities Tamils went through during those hate filled days in May-June 1958, with 12,000 of them becoming refugees in their own country and shipped to their own safe areas in the north and east Mr. Vittachi felt impelled to

"Militancy connotes violence, and violence seen without its rationale and source of motivation, is certainly disturbing to the average mind; particularly to those who have no interest in knowing or hearing about either. It is the symptom, the external manifestation that troubles them, not the internal agony that caused it."

In an attempt to white-wash the July 1983 riots, the Sri Lanka government published a series of glossy, multi-coloured brochures with which they bombarded the various capitals of the world, the first of which was authored by the then Sri Lankan ambassador to the United States, Ernest Corea. In a reply to that, the present writer said:

"... Says Mr. Corea: "The separatist slogan, let it not be forgotten did not enter Sri Lanka's political lexicon until 1976". Who wants to forget? We are glad that Mr.Corea admitted it, because that is a fact that stands to the credit of the Tamils. For twenty long years they suffered racial discrimination, racial riots, plunder of their traditional homelands, police and army harassments and open State hostility. Through that period of twenty years the Tamils raised their voice in Parliament, on public platforms and through the media, and in international fora. They went before courts of law. They staged protests and non-violent Satyagraha campaigns. They entered into pacts and gentlepose that question, surely you should have a good word for the spirit of accommodation of the Tamils for having waited eighteen more years to decide to "part ways" - and introduce "separatism into the political lexicon" in 1976? "

Tarzie Vittachi's words belong to a past, now a hazy past in the light of the more terrible happenings that were to follow, a past in which the very possibility of Tamil militancy was furthest from the minds of the Tamils or the Sinhalese themselves.

The only redeeming aspect of the 1958 riots was that at the point of time the country's police and armed forces felt at liberty to open fire on Sinhala hoodlums. That was never to happen in subsequent riots in 1977, 1981 and 1983. This fact is significant in order to understand how the Tamils who in the early years were at least considered qualified to merit the same legal rights as the Sinhalese citizens, were gradually brought down to the level of subject people. Since the topic here is Tamil militancy, it is worth recording at this point that the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran was barely four years old at the time Tamils were subjected to physical attacks for the first time on an island-wide scale that year. There is also a symbolic significance in the fact that two years previously in 1956, the first persons to taste violence by goondas through stoning and physical manhandling at Galle Face Green in Colombo were the Tamil leaders and parliamentarians themselves, headed by the late respected Gandhian leader S.J.V. Chelvanayakam. When subsequently A. Amirthalingam walked into the parliament House with a bandage around his forehead, along with fellow M.P.s the then Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was reported to have exclaimed in a spirit of macabre humour: "Ah! The soldiers of war!".

1958 also marked the year when Tamils became refugees in their own country. They were to graduate into becoming refugees in twenty other countries only much later. Tarzie Vittachi whom I quoted earlier, in recording some of the known incidents of mob terror that Tamils faced in Colombo, narrates this incident:

"... Another Tamil officer working in the same Government department was not so fortunate. The thugs stormed into his house and assaulted his wife and grown-up daughter in the presence of his little child. His mind cracked under the shock. In the French liner LAOS which took the family away to safety in Jaffna he insisted on reciting large chunks of the Bhagavad Gita to the captain of the ship.

All his formal education - he is a Cambridge scholar - had proved useless to him in the face of disaster. His broken mind reached out for the only solace a man has when his ingenuity and ability have proved futile".

This of course is in character with the Tamil Hindu society of that generation. Escapism was the only impulse-either into safer foreign climes or into religious faith. The thought of resistance in some form of other never entered their minds. If after twenty years, a new generation of Tamils reached for the AK-47 rifle instead of the Bhagavad Gita there surely must be a historical explanation for it, if not justification.

Militancy connotes violence, and violence seen without its rationale and source of motivation, is certainly disturbing to the average mind; particularly to those who have no interest in knowing or hearing about either. It is the symptom, the external manifestation that troubles them, not the internal agony that caused it. This naturally results in popular prejudices, which in course of time get entrenched and continue to colour the thinking and perceptions of most people. But there is one undeniable advantage that violence has over non-violence: It is a superior attention-getter!

But for the orgy of violence of July 1983, and because it also engulfed the capital of Colombo with its presence of tourists, and embassies and diplomatic missions, the world (even next-door India) would not have known much about the agony that the Tamils had undergone the previous quarter century.

This writer cannot think of any Indian national leader, with the exception of C. Rajagopalachari, who had shown any interest in Ceylon's ethnic problem in the sixties. It was to the credit of Rajaji that he time and again, particularly through his writings in the "Swarajaya", advocated Federalism as the only constitutional device to solve the problems that the Tamils faced. It took another twenty years for Indian leaders even to suggest a scheme of devolution under the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement for Peace which fell far short of what Rajaji had in mind. Three years later now, neither has the agreement worked, nor has it brought peace.

To be continued in the next issue

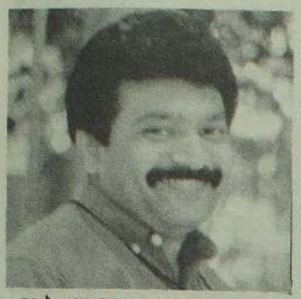
Sivanayagam imprisonment without trial enters 318th day

On the 1st of June 1992, Mr.S.Sivanayagam, the Founding Editor of the Tamil Nation entered his 318th day of incarceration, without trial, in an Indian jail.

The detention order served on Mr.–Sivanayagam was under the Indian National Security Act and there is no appeal to the High Court. Mr. Sivanayagam invoked the general power of the Courts to review an administrative order, by making a writ application to the Madras High Court to quash the detention order. **In a judgment delivered in March, the Madras High Court rejected Mr.Sivanayagam's application for judicial review.** The High Court having no appellate power, did not rule on the question whether the detention order was justified or whether Mr.Sivanayagam was a threat to national security. **Mr. Sivanayagam has now appealed from the judgement of the High Court to the Supreme Court in New Delhi and the appeal will be heard only in mid July. The one year detention order served on Mr.Sivanayagam will expire on 20 July. A Release Sivanayagam Fund to help defray the legal and other expenses connected with the campaign to release Mr.Sivanayagam was launched by Tamil Forum Ltd in October 1991. Contributions drawn in favour of Release Sivanayagam Fund may be sent to Dr.Rajan Namasivayam, P.O.Box 373, Croydon, Surrey CR9 6AB, United Kingdom. Each contribution will be individually and gratefully acknowledged.**

The London Weekly, Eastern Eye, goes on the trail of

THE ELUSIVE TIGER



Velupillai Prabhakaran is the most wanted man in the whole of South Asia. For more than a decade he has eluded the combined might of both Indian and Sri Lankan security forces.

"If you are fighting the devil and the devil's mistress left a bag of gold at your door - you would be a fool to refuse it - providing you keep your back covered."

Little is known about him - other than the scant information he himself releases. For 15 years the man has held Sri Lanka to virtual ransom. Prabhakaran has been accused - with little evidence - of masterminding the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. He is a hero to thousands. He is the man whose iron will and commitment to the dream of an independent Tamil state has inspired thousands to pledge - and gladly give - their lives to this cause.

In the last 15 years, a small force of undisciplined and youthful 'freedom fighters' has been welded into both an army and a guerrilla force.

They have entered into pitched battles with the might of the Sri Lankan and Indian armies -and beaten them.Three weeks ago the Sri Lankan army committed 20,000 men and a battalion of armour in an attempt to penetrate one of the Tamil advance camps. The effort was a humiliating failure. He has created an aura of invincibility around the Tigers.

That he is well educated there is no doubt. The few journalists who have met him are impressed with his quick and sure grasp of world affairs and his deep knowledge of his own country's history.

Prabhakaran is both legend and myth. He is a man who has a habit of disappearing for long periods, encouraging speculation that he has been killed or overthrown - only to emerge at the most embarrassing time for his many enemies, declaring that rumours of his passing have been greatly exaggerated.

Between 1989 and 1990, both the Indian and Sri Lankan media were filled with stories he had been overthrown and assassinated by his second-in-command, Mahathaya. There were even first hand accounts of his death, and blow-by-blow details of the gory details of the final hours of a betrayed leader.

One article described how - after he had been summarily executed - his body was suspended upside down from a tree. Yet less than a month after this article appeared Prabhakaran appeared, dapper and well nourished - and typically unannounced, before a press conference - holding hands with his alleged betrayer!

One thing is certain, however. Under his control, the Tamil Tigers have emerged as one of the most ruthless and effective guerrilla forces on earth.

He has spurned offers by both President Ranasinghe Premadasa and former President Junius Jayewardene for a negotiated settlement of the Tamil grievances.

Prabhakaran once said that "If Jayewardene was a true Buddhist, I would not be carrying a gun." He has a quick eye for the hypocrisy implicit in most political stances.

Under his direction, the LTTE has become a disciplined army, strong enough to defy the might of a 50,000 strong Indian army, sent by the then Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi as a self-styled 'peace-keeping force'.

He forced this Indian adventure into colonialism to a humiliating defeat. After years of humiliation at his hands, successive governments have increased the effort -and reward - for his capture. But all this has succeeded in doing is create new myths.

One such myth - which may have some basis in fact - is that he is living in a heavily defended bunker in the Tamil stronghold of Velvetturai

One of the questions which have constantly puzzled government officials and journalists alike is: "Where does he get the money to arm and feed such an effective army?"

So-called experts are coy about this. Much depends on political viewpoints. Prabha himself, in a rare interview, said once: "If you are fighting the devil and the devil's mistress left a bag of gold at your door - you would be a fool to refuse it - providing you keep your back covered." *(Excerpts from the London Weekly 'Eastern Eye' article on April 14)*

New Home Secretary to review UK Asylum Bill

Re-introduction of the UK Asylum Bill is to be delayed until Kenneth Clarke, the Home Secretary, has undertaken a thorough review of his predecessor's measures for curbing the number of refugees allowed to settle in Britain. There were signs he might be prepared to search for a consensus to defuse arguments which may have damaged race relations.

The previous bill, abandoned when the general election was called, met strong opposition from the House of Lords, the Archbishops of Canterbury and Westminster, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Bar Council and refugee support groups. They feared that without a proper right of appeal it could deny sanctuary to some genuine asylum seekers. Government business managers said Mr Clarke "wants to take stock and look again at the whole thing".

It was understood to be still possible he would bring the legislation back before the summer recess in much the same form as during the House of Lords committee stage at the end of the last session, but it was looking more likely he would postpone re-introduction until the autumn to resolve disagreements with the bill's critics.

A sharp decline in the number of asylum applications has cast additional doubt on some of the more drastic solutions. The rate declined from 3,725 a month in 1991 to 1,725 a month in the first quarter of this year. Ministers believe the problem may have been accentuated by multiple applications from benefit fraudsters, now being deterred by tighter DSS regulations.

"From the Government's point of view some of the heat has gone out of this issue, and that should make it easier for Mr Clarke to pause, consult and adopt a more consensual approach," said Alf Dubs, director of the Refugee Council.*(Courtesy: Guardian)*

Europe faces most desperate refugee crisis since 1945

The war in Yugoslavia has pushed Europe into the most desperate refugee crisis since 1945, with more than 1.2m people fleeing their homes and a further 300,000 expected to follow in the next few weeks.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Yugoslavia, more than 125,000 people have sought asylum in Germany, 70,000 in Hungary and 20,000 in Austria. Sweden reports refugees arriving at the rate of 1,000 a day. Within the warring states that once formed Yugoslavia, 600,000 are roaming in search of a home.

Even these figures take account only of those who have openly sought help. Thousands of others are believed to have fled using tourist visas as a cover.

The West is reluctantly facing up to the daunting prospect that the refugee crisis is still in its infancy, and that no amount of intricately drafted immigration law will block what threatens to be a sustained assault on Europe's borders.

Since January 1990 more than 570,000 people, the vast majority from Eastern Europe, have applied for asylum in Germany. In little more than two years the immigrant equivalent of a city the size of Stuttgart has been grafted on to the German population. By contrast, Britain recorded 44,700 asylum seekers last year. *(Courtesy: Guardian)*

TULF wants to try again!

According to the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) spokesman Mr P Sivapalam, the TULF will take a more active role in future, emphasising democratic measures and humanitarian values. The TULF old guards, Messrs M Sivasithamparam, R Sampantham and V Anandasangari are expected to arrive from India before the end of May. Mr Sivapalam said that the TULF has decided to alienate itself from any form of armed struggle and to function independently and work towards finding a political solution to the 'ethnic' conflict. Not yet again?

News Watch

Security forces arrest refugees

Sivarasa Kuganeswaran and Kathiresan Navaneethan, two refugees returning from Tamil Nadu, have been arrested by the Sri lankan security forces and have been detained at the High Security Prison. Sivarasa was arrested from the refugee camp at Verpankulam in Vavuniya on 15th April. Navaneethan who had worked at the Vavuniya Post Office, had on his return gone back, on 27th March, to inquire whether he could get his job back. It was there that he was nabbed by the Sri Lankan army.

Reinstatement promise broken

Five Tamil refugees, former employees of the Electricity Dept. of the Trincomalee Town Council, who returned from Tamil Nadu nearly three months ago have up to now not been given their jobs back. These refugees returned to Trincomalee on the understanding that Government servants will be reinstated. As the Government servants are not entitled to any refugee assistance, the Refugee Rehabilitation Organisation gave them no help. The families of the refugees are undergoing severe hardship as a result.

Surplus food in Jaffna,says GA

According to a report issued by the Secretary to the Ministry of Refugee Rehabilitation, Mr Christy Silva, the Government Agent, Jaffna, had informed him that there was a surplus of rice and flour in the Jaffna district at the moment. The GA had requested that further supplies of rice & flour should not be sent to Jaffna until further notice. He said that there were now 6000 metric tonnes of rice 5000 metric tonnes of flour in stock.

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FORUM

The TAMIL NATION exists to debate and campaign for the radical changes necessary, both amongst the Tamil people and outside, if the struggle of the Tamil people for national self determination is to be won. Theory and practise are the two legs on which we walk. Theory informs practice and practice refines our theory. Nationalism has emerged as the dominant political phenomenon of the 1990s and clearly, there is a need to further our understanding of that which moves so many thousands upon thousands to willingly die so that their nation may live. We publish here an article by Gunter Minnerup in Argument-Sonderbande, which examines the failure of some Marxist theories about nationalism. We invite our readers to participate in this debate about the political force and legitimacy of nationalism in general and of Tamil nationalism, in particular.

Marxism and the Nation

Since Karl Marx and Frederick Engels proclaimed, nearly a century and a half ago, that "the workers have no fatherland", the fatherlands of the world have mushroomed to a present count of around 160 independent states.

And from Quebec to Azania, from Euzkadi to Timor, more people - including a fair share of proletarians - are queuing up to demand a nation state of their own. It is undeniable that, however much the triumphant march of capitalism around the globe may have fulfilled the predictions of the Communist Manifesto in eroding and levelling out economic and cultural differences between nations, nationalism as a political ideology and movement has followed in its footsteps from continent to continent to become the most powerful and ubiquitous political phenomenon in the modern world.

Tom Nairn (1975), in his perceptive essay on the Modern Janus, has called the theory of nationalism "Marxism's great failure". Certainly it has made little progress in this respect since the days of Otto Bauer, Rosa Luxemburg, the young Stalin and V.I. Lenin. But neither, it could be argued, has it in any other field since then: the half-century following the initial years of the great Soviet experiment turning into five decades largely wasted from the point of view or the theoretical development of Marxism.

As far as the problems posed by the nation and nationalism were concerned, Russian Stalinism suited its answers to fit the exigencies of dealing with its national minorities at home and its many tactical turnabouts abroad while social democracy came to adopt the bourgeois notion of the Kulturnation in theory and imperialism in practice.

Any assessment of Marxist's theoretical record on nationalism and in particular of its ability to remedy the weaknesses and plug the gaps, will therefore have to take Marxist's own history into account. It must not be forgotten that, in its classical era before Stalinism and the embourgeoisement of social democracy, Marxist writings on nationalism had to be largely content with European nationalism as their raw material at a time when the pre-war orgies of imperialist chauvinism tended to highlight the conflict between national and class loyalties, or - as in the case of the Austromarxists - addressed the problem from the standpoint of socialists of the dominant nationality seeking to prevent the disintegration of the empires they were to inherit.

Today it is possible to draw on a broader canvas. The awakening of the Third World has provided a wealth of material for the study of nationalism and especially of a revolutionary nationalism far removed from the implacable enemy of working class solidarity and socialism which the dominant nationalisms of imperialist Europe have been since the late 19th century. **Whatever the shortcomings of Marxist theory on nationalism, many Asian, African and Latin American revolutions have seen a drawing together of socialists and revolutionary nationalists against a common enemy.**

But even in Europe and North America, a deepening economic and social crisis has produced an upsurge of popular and often radical nationalist movement in regions where the "national question" had long seemed the concern of romantic poets and political cranks only. With all this happening against the background of the irreversible disintegration of the Stalinist monolith - itself, ironically, to a large measure the result of nationalist pressures - and the resurgence of Marxism as an ideological influence among the left wings of the old socialist parties, new radical youth movements and a sector of the academic intelligentsia, conditions could now be ripe for overcoming the great theoretical failure diagnosed by Nairn and many others.

The Problem of Conceptualization

Access to the nature of nationalism may be found through an analysis of its historical function. Whether left or right, conservative or revolutionary, nationalism as a politico- ideological force clearly comes into play whenever the legitimacy of existing political arrangements is called into question.

Thus early European nationalism was a challenge to a feudal order which had its legitimacy fatally eroded by the totality of social, economic and ideological developments. The nationalism of the established capitalist nation states is essentially an integrative device to legitimize the social and political status quo, and assumes particularly virulent forms in periods of external conflict (jingoism, chauvinism) or internal threats (Bonapartism, fascism).

The revolutionary nationalisms of the Third World are directed against the intolerable status of economic and cultural dependence and/or the illegitimacy of pro- imperialist, parasitical and oppressive puppet regimes.

The resurgence of radical nationalism and separatism in Western Europe is just as clearly linked to the declining legitimacy of centralized power structures (collapse of Francoism in Spain, bankruptcy of oppressive Unionism in Ulster, growing resentment of "remote control" from Westminster in Scotland and Wales) as the growing importance of nationalism in the East is to the weakening grip of Soviet hegemony and the creeping economic and social crisis of bureaucratic centralism.

Nationalism can therefore be conceptualized as a political ideology or political movement with a particular and distinctive notion of the legitimacy of political power: that it should be firmly anchored in the common interests and the solidarity of a national unit, however this unit and these interests are defined.

The national interest and national solidarity can be identified with the interests of the ruling class or elite and a repressive solidarity against its internal or external subversion, or it can be the articulation of popular aspirations to social, economic and political freedom. It can serve democracy as well as tyranny, it can be narrowly exclusivist in outlook and spirit, as well as internationalist.

It is this fundamental ambiguity that poses all the problems for socialist theory and practice. As abstract conceptualizations of societal organization, "class" and "nation" appear as mutually exclusive and irreconcilable.

But not quite as irreconcilable as it would seem: the emancipatory promise of socialism is, after all, not narrowly restricted to sectional interests - not even those of the working class - while the social content of revolutionary nationalism can come very close indeed to socialism.

"Self-determination" has both a national and a social dimension, and, in an age of unprecedented concentration of industrial, financial, political and military power in the hands of the few blocking the road to equality and liberty for the many, these dimensions are increasingly overlapping.

Class and Nation

Class consciousness and national consciousness are never actually found in tidy separation, but coexist and intermix in the consciousness of both individuals and collectives.

But whereas class consciousness is essentially a reflection of the objective material reality of the class structure of society and the individual's place in it, the relationship of national consciousness to objective material reality is entirely different: social classes exist quite independent of whether or not their existence is "acknowledged" by class consciousness - nations, however, have no such objective material existence.

Those aspects of social reality which normally constitute the "raw materials" of national identity - language, culture, race, territory, religion, historical experience, economic association, etc - are not "national" as such, but only become "national" through their subjective perception as such. It is on this rock that most traditional Marxist analyses of the nation and nationalism have foundered.

Kautsky, Bauer, and Stalin - the most influential "classical" Marxist authors on this problem - all attempted to define an objective "essence" of the nation which provided the material foundation of national identity, consciousness, and nationalism. For Kautsky (1929), this was the common language as the natural vehicle for the emergence of a capitalist "home market" and the bourgeois nation state; for Otto Bauer (1924), a "community of fate" bound together by a common language, culture, and historical experience; for Stalin "a historically-grown stable community of language, territory, economic life and a psychological make-up manifested in a common culture". The dogmatic narrowness of the latter's definition, moreover, culminated in the assertion that "if only one of them is lacking, the nation ceases to be a nation" (Stalin 1913, 10-11; my own translation).

The common flaw in all these "objectivist" definitions is that they are empirically untenable. They cannot explain the emergence of nations without a common language or the existence of nationalist movements among people lacking even a common territory and/or economic life. Most importantly, however, by focusing on the supposedly "objective" character of the nation, they one-sidedly stress its "communal" aspects and therefore end up with a schematic juxtaposition of "the social" and "the national" which renders them incapable of understanding the real dialectic of class and national interests and movements and the mutual interdependence of class and national consciousness.

The solution to the riddle lies in firmly relegating the "objective factors" to the status of raw material: elements which, in various combinations, are undoubtedly essential prerequisite of national identity, but do not as such constitute it.

The qualitative step that elevates regional, linguistic, cultural, racial, religious, economic and other identities to the level of "the national" is their politicisation, the desire to make them the basis of self-government (which may or may not mean full independence as a nation state). Insofar as any such national entity comprises different social classes and national identity and national consciousness cut across class lines, class and nation are incompatible political principles.

On the other hand, however, the nation is the essential arena of the class struggle and in this sense the condition sine qua non of the constitution of political class consciousness. The social relations between individuals of the same class, as well as those between different and antagonistic classes are tempered and mediated by national factors, just as the specific social and political physiognomy of a nation is a product of the class struggle within it.

It is inherently impossible therefore to attempt to separate the social from the national, to cleanse class consciousness from its "national impurities". What needs to be grasped is the specificity of the combination of social and national factors in each particular case.

Theory and Practice

Whatever the terminology employed, however, a theoretical definition of the nation and nationalism that does not also provide a guide for action ceases to be Marxist theory; just as the Marxist theory of class and the Marxist theory of the state become lifeless sociological abstractions - and thus also useless as tools of scientific inquiry - if divorced from the practical context of the political class struggle.

It is surely no coincidence that Otto Bauer, Joseph Stalin, Rosa Luxemburg and V.I. Lenin - to name just the most prominent and influential - were all Eastern European Marxists confronted with the complex realities of the Romanov and Habsburg multinational empires.

Lenin never developed a systematic theory of the nation and nationalism as such, and appears to have been strongly influenced on this point - as indeed on many others - by Karl Kautsky. His voluminous writings on the national question are of interest today primarily for their political approach to the problem, their insistence that the national question "belongs wholly and exclusively to the sphere of political democracy" (Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 24, 127).

For Lenin, the problem of a definition never really arose since the most burning practical task was not to identify the elements uniting a given nationality, but to break away the working masses from their bourgeois leaderships. Nothing could, however, be more effective a weapon in the hands of the bourgeois nationalists than the denial, on whatever sound "theoretical" grounds, of the right to national self-determination by the socialist movement, particularly by the socialist movement of the oppressor nation in the name of "class unity": "The workers of those nations which under

"a theoretical definition of the nation and nationalism that does not also provide a guide for action ceases to be Marxist theory"

capitalism were oppressor nations must take exceptional care not to hurt the national sentiments of the oppressed nations (...) and must not only promote genuine equality, but also the development of the language and literature of the working people of the formerly oppressed nations so as to remove all traces of distrust and alienation inherited from the epoch of capitalism. (Lenin, Collected Works, Vol.21, 412-414).

"Genuine equality" and the removal of all traces of distrust and alienation", however could only be achieved if the rights of oppressed nations were not subject to any qualifications, not even those supposedly grounded in Marxist theory (as was implied by Stalin's edict that if any of his "objective criteria" were absent in any given case, "the nation ceases to be a nation" and thus presumably to have a right to self-determination): **"We demand freedom of self—determination, i.e. independence, i.e. freedom of secession for the oppressed nations, not because we have dreamt of splitting up the country economically, or of the ideal of small states, but, on the contrary, because we want larger states and the closer unity and even fusion of nations, only on a truly democratic, truly internationalist basis, which is inconceivable without the freedom to secede"** (cf. Ko[illegible]ing 1976):

Lenin was, of course, never guided by a concept of democracy divorced from the class struggle. Bourgeois democracy could only be limited, formal democracy; only socialist democracy would be true democracy.

But it was for precisely this reason that Lenin never saw a contradiction in the counter-position of the democratic right of an oppressed nation to secede and form its own state and the socialist principles of centralization and internationalism since the only way of proving concretely the superiority of socialist over bourgeois democracy was the removal of all restrictions on the exercise of democratic rights.

The sharp distinction between respect for the right to form an independent state and actual support for secession was to give rise to all sorts of problems after the October Revolution and Lenin never specified the precise conditions under which Marxists should give such support.

His eventual acceptance of federalism would seem to indicate that his thought continued to evolve and that it can by no means be considered as the kind of finished edifice of orthodoxy it became for some of his epigons. One does not have to ignore these and other limitations of Lenin's writings on the national question, even less condone the many atrocities committed in the name of a "leninist nationalities policy", to acknowledge their importance as the main reference point in the legacy of "classical Marxism" for any fresh attempt to construct a systematic Marxist theory of the nation.

The thoughts offered for discussion in this paper can only be prolegomena to such an enterprise, seeking to identify the main methodological and theoretical traps to be avoided in the necessary empirical study of the great diversity of specific combinations of national and class struggles which alone can further advance this project.

India's Generals pay tribute to LTTE

"Numerous questions were to be asked as to why the IPKF could not capture or kill Prabhakaran; another equally wild allegation was that the IPKF had orders not to kill Prabhakaran. Apart from the impossibility of singling out an individual target for destruction or protection in such an environment, we must remember that, by virtue of the fact that the LTTE had an effective junior leadership, the loss of Prabhakaran could never have resulted in the disintegration of the LTTE... The Indian armed forces will always have a healthy respect for the LTTE's incredibile motivation and magnificient fighting prowess"

Lieutenant General Depinder Singh

"I have a high regard for the LTTE for its discipline, dedication, determination, motivation and technical expertise"

Lieutenant General S. C. Sardeshpande

Lt. General Depinder Singh, who served as the overall force commander of the IPKF and Lt. General S. C. Sardesh Pande who served as IPKF Divisional Commander, Jaffna have written about their experiences. Depinder Singh's book is titled 'IPKF in Sri Lanka' whilst Sardesh Pande calls his effort 'Assignment Jaffna'.

The two generals make clear that New Delhi consistently directed them to implement the hard option, to go for the LTTE with every thing that they had and wipe them out. The two books give the lie direct to the perception in some quarters that New Delhi had not wanted to kill or apprehend Prabhakaran.

On the question of killing Prabhakaran, Lt.General Depinder Singh says: **"Numerous questions were to be asked as to why the IPKF could not capture or kill Prabhakaran; another equally wild allegation was that the IPKF had orders not to kill Prabhakaran. Apart from the impossibility of singling out an individual target for destruction or protection in such an environment, we must remember that, by virtue of the fact that the LTTE had an effective junior leadership, the loss of Prabhakaran could never have resulted in the disintegration of the LTTE".**

Sardesh Pande writes that in the third week of January 1988 'intelligence' was flashed to the Jaffna IPKF Command from New Delhi and Madras that Prabhakaran and some of his top aides were moving in the coastal belt of Valikamam division of the peninsula, in the areas of Keerimalai - Maviddapuram - Tellipalai - Alaveddy - Masikappiddi - Tolpuram. The Valikamam brigade was asked to apprehend or kill LTTE leaders and other hard core cadres. The effort failed.

On another occasion para-commandos were landed in Moolai on information that Prabhakaran was in that area. But the Tiger leader had managed to get away because the progress of the commandos had been stalled by the LTTE.

Lt. General Depinder Singh also writes of his opposition to New Delhi's decision to take on the LTTE:

"On October 6, 1987, the Chief of the Army Staff, General Sundariji flew into Palaly where he was briefed about the situation. It was apparent that the political decision to employ force against the LTTE was already taken. My recommendation to General Sundariji was that we must not go in for the hard option because if we did, we would be stuck in an insurgency situation for the next 20 years. I was admonished not to adopt a defeatist attitude, to which my reply was that I was not being defeatist, merely realistic".

New Delhi's and Dixit's belief that killing Prabhakaran would see an end to the Tiger movement, was clearly not shared by the Indian army's senior soldiers who were battling with it in the north and east.

As a part of the effort to isolate the Tigers, Lt.General Sardesh Pande developed a close relationship with the people of Jaffna to collect information. One consequence was that he was left with the impression that the LTTE was the expression of popular Tamil sentiment and could not be destroyed, so long as that sentiment remained. He felt that the other groups, which, New Delhi was promoting, could seriously jeopardize his counter insurgency project by alienating the Tamils from the IPKF because they saw these groups as "unprincipled, undisciplined, opportunistic, cowardly, corrupt, crude, and selfish bands of thugs and extortionists"

Lt.General Depinder Singh says of his book: "This (book) is a left-handed salute to the LTTE whose deviousness cannot over shadow their incredible motivation and magnificent fighting prowess, for which the Indian armed forces will always have a healthy respect". Lieutenant General S. C. Sardesh Pande expresses a similar view in his book:: "I have a high regard for the LTTE for its discipline, dedication, determination, motivation and technical expertise".

These views give credence to the story that J.N.Dixit, now India's Foreign Secretary and then India's Viceregal High Commissioner in Colombo, had once protested to the IPKF High Command that some of its officers were saluting Prabhakaran.

இவள்
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சுடுகின் வேகம்
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பிறந்தவள்
அதனால்

பிறந்த மண்ணின்
சோகங்களை,
சொந்த மக்களின்
இழப்புகளை
இவளுக்குள்ளே மழைந்தன
பூகம்பமாய் வெடித்தது.

இதனால்
எதிர்த்த வருகின்றன் -
சுகங்களைத் துறந்து
சுதந்திரத்தை
நேசித்திருந்தன் -
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Saturday 13th June 1992 9am - 8pm.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF TAMILS

The Tamil national liberation struggle is not taking place in outer space. It is taking place on the ground - and in the Indian region. The political impact of much that happens on the Indian sub continent is also felt by the people of Tamil Eelam. Though reports of the disintegration of the Indian Union are often greatly exaggerated, events in the Soviet Union show that empires do crumble, if they do not recognise, well in time, the political force of emergent nationalisms, and take steps to restructure in a genuine and meaningful way. And for the Indian Union the time is now. Unity will emerge only when the different nations of the Indian Union are recognised as equals, not when it is sought to deny their existence. Unity will emerge only when New Delhi acquires the vision and the strength to constitute a confederal commonwealth of free and equal nations. It will be futile for New Delhi, Canute like, to order the rising tide of emergent nationalism to recede. The rising tide of Sikh nationalism will not recede in the years to come. Neither will Kashmiri nationalism recede. Nor will Assamese nationalism. Nor for that matter will Tamil nationalism recede in the years to come. On the contrary, these nationalisms will grow from year to year. The words of Lord Avebury, in an article published in the December 1991 issue of the Tamil Nation, are apposite: "There are momentous changes beginning to take shape all over the world, and India cannot insulate herself from the new dispensation."

The Indian Region

Rising inflation threatens India's stability

Rising inflation, leading to increasing public resentment, is threatening India's radical economic reforms. Wheat is in short supply and prices have risen more than 25% over the past year. It is reported that the government may run out of the wheat that is sold at subsidised prices at ration shops. If this happens, open-market prices are likely to go even higher creating a crisis which the minority government of P V Narasimha Rao may find difficult to handle. Rao's survival will depend to a great extent on his success in holding down inflation (now at 15%) while he implements the free-market reforms suggested by the International Monetary Fund. But the reality is that new foreign investment is only a trickle in what was until recently a heavily state-controlled economy.

The government's stocks of wheat are down to virtually zero. It needs up to 18m tonnes of grain annually for its ration shops and desperately needs to build up its wheat stocks now that the harvest is arriving. The government fixes what it calls a procurement price for buying wheat. This usually amounts to a support price in the surplus states of the north-west. Procurement topped 11m tonnes in 1990 but slumped to 7.7m tonnes in 1991 and could fall lower this year. This is because open-market prices have been higher. The government has raised its procurement price, but not enough.

So it has tried another strategy: to impose curbs on the movement of grain out of the surplus states, notably Punjab, with the idea creating a local glut that will force the price down. The farmer's organisation has responded by trying to boycott government procurement. Arrivals of grain have dropped to a trickle. According to some reports from Punjab, policemen are forcing farmers to unloads their harvest at government purchasing centres. Nonetheless, prices are edging upwards.

In the past, when procurements have fallen short of what it needs, the government has imported wheat. This time this would be hard, but not impossible. The rupee has depreciated by 40% over the past year, and the world wheat price has gone up. The cost of imported wheat would be far above the local procurement rate. Relations with the IMF would be difficult: the conditions it has set for a big loan included limits on food subsidies. **Nonetheless, India may be compelled to enter the world market for up to 3m tonnes later this year. With foreign-exchange reserves at almost $6 billion, it can afford the needed $600m. But wheat prices-and inflation-seem set to increase and if this happens, the political repercussions will be unsettling.**

Bhandari rides again?

The SLFP played its 'India Card' when Mr Kingsley T Wickremaratne Member of Parliament & Treasurer of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party & Mr Nimal Siripala de Silva Member of Parliament represented it at the 79th Plenary Session of the All India Congress Party held in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh in April 1992. A message of felicitation was sent by Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike tracing the close ties of the two countries to the Chairman of the Congress Shri P V Narasimha Rao. Indian Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao presented the Sri Lankan delegates with Gold Plated Plaques. Picture shows: Mr Nimal Siripala de Silva, SLFP Member of Parliament with Mr. Romesh Bhandari, Chairman Foreign Affairs Cell, All India Congress & former Foreign Secretary of India. **Not to be outdone, the ruling UNP invited Mr.Bhandari to participate in this years May Day celebrations in Colombo.** Eelam Tamil activists will remember Mr. Romesh Bandhari's 'active' role at the Thimpu Talks in 1985. He was then serving as Indian Foreign Secretary. He was later appointed Lt.Governor of New Delhi. On V.P.Singh coming into power in 1988, Mr.Bhandari was transferred as Governor of the Andaman Islands - a transfer which he refused to accept. He resigned and it was widely believed in the run up to the last Indian General Election, before the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, that Mr.Bandhari would be the new External Affairs Minister, if Rajiv won. In the event, Mr.Bhandari failed to win a Lok Sabha seat at the General Election.

"US trying to bully India" say Indian MPs

The US decision to withdraw duty benefits which the Indian pharmaceutical exports enjoyed under the generalised system of preferences (GSP) provoked an angry reaction in the Lok Sabha on April 30 with the Union Commerce Minister Mr P Chidambaram calling it "unjustified and unwarranted", and the entire House demanding a review of Indo-US relations in the light of this development.

The issue dominated the proceedings for nearly an hour and there was a strong demand, especially from the Left and the Janata Dal members, that India should "retaliate" by calling off its proposed joint naval exercise with the US Members, cutting across party lines, also suggested that the House adopt a unanimous resolution "condemning" the US action. **The decision was seen as an attempt by the US to "bully" India into "surrendering" its economic sovereignty.**

The Opposition and the ruling party spoke with one voice in condemning the US action and urging the Government to stand up to such pressures. There was also a demand that India should mobilise other non-aligned countries in resisting what the Congress (I) member Mr Mani Shankerlyer described as an attempt by the US to reduce the rest of the world to the status of its "vassal States".

In fact, the demand for "reassessing" Indo-US relations first came from the Congress (I) with Mr Iyer pointing out how the Government approached the problem would be a "litmus test" of the country's "sovereignty." He said there was need to "reassess our entire relationship with the US" and stand up against "bullying." He urged the Government not to treat it as a "technical" issue, because at stake was the question of resisting the US quest for domination.

...but India warned of tougher measures to come...

But in the meantime, the Bush administration has threatened more retaliatory action against India if it fails to tighten up its relevant laws to prevent the piracy of US pharmaceutical patents.

In a special White House briefing arranged on May1, for a group of non-resident Indians, Ms Nancy Adam, Assistant Deputy Secretary, in the office of the US Trade Representative (USER), said that the suspension on April 29 of duty-free treatment to India's exports of pharmaceuticals and chemicals **was only "a first minor step." "Though minor, it is not an insignificant step," she said. "We wanted to send a strong signal to India about our seriousness on the protection of intellectual property rights."**

Ms Adam, a trade negotiator for 14 years, said the US could have deprived India of import privileges that it extended to the developing countries under the Generalised System of Preferences (GAP) on more items than it had actually done covering only the chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

Ms Adam said the US was keen on settling the dispute through negotiations which would continue as before despite the retaliatory action and retention of India on the "Special 301" list for another year.

She denied that the punitive action was politically motivated.

Ms Adam hit out at India's press, pharmaceutical manufacturers and politicians for carrying on a campaign that the patent protection was an "anti-poor" measure as it would push up the prices of medicines. What India was basically doing in this regard, she said, was absolute theft. *(Courtesy: Hindu, 30 April)*

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The Emerging Multipolar World

US reacts to India/Russia Rocket Deal

The Bush Administration hit India and Russia with punitive trade sanctions for disregarding US pressure and going ahead with their $250 million rocket engine deal. State Department Deputy Spokesman Richard Boucher said Washington had imposed sanctions against the Russian space agency Glavkosmos and the Indian Space Research Organisation because of their decision not to terminate their contract for transfer of cyrogenic rocket engines to assist India's work on a space vehicle launch program. This follows upon the Bush ban on April 29 on duty free imports of pharmaceuticals from India into US, valued at over $60 million.

In the meantime, political analysts comment that though India's ties with Russia may never be restored to the 'natural ally' status that existed with the former Soviet Union, the relationship is warming after a sharp dip, with the Russian government rediscovering India's economic and strategic importance.

Sri Lanka snubs Japan

Dr A T Ariyaratne the Sinhala Sarvodaya Leader received the prestigious Niwano Peace Prize at an award ceremony held at Century Hayatt Hotel in Tokyo in early May. Though the ceremony was attended by over a thousand invitees, a notable absentee was the Sri Lanka Ambassador to Japan, who had declined to attend. On behalf of the Japanese Government, Mr Kunio Hatoyama, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture delivered a congratulatory address.

Radical appraisal of aid policy by EC

It is reliably reported that the European Commission is preparing a radical reappraisal of its development aid policy. At a meeting in Seville on May 9th, the commissioner in charge of foreign aid, Manuel Marin, presented a 90-page document to his 16 fellow commissioners. It was called "Development Co-operation Policy to the Year 2000". This will be the basic working document for the debate about how the European Community should reshape its approach to foreign aid in the coming months - a debate that will involve governments and independent aid agencies. It is thought that the impact of huge quantities of development aid in many third-world countries has been "quite modest". **In future recipients of EC aid will be expected to show "good government" (ie, to guarantee that aid money is not wasted or stolen). They will be expected to show respect for human rights. They will also be told to apply free-market economic principles. It is understood that this approach is in line with British and French thinking.**

In the past the EC has adopted a 'softly, softly' approach and tried to set conditions for aid discreetly. Marin proposes to set them publicly. The commissioner has also drawn distinctions in aid policy between different regions of the world. **In respect of South-East Asia he suggests that priority should be given to increasing exports to, and investments in, one of the most economically dynamic areas of the world.** Together, the European Community and individual EC members provide 40% of the world's foreign aid. Marin takes them to task for muddling through. He thinks not enough aid is co-ordinated. This creates pointless rivalries between EC countries.

Washington Post comments on

Kashmir and the Bomb

India is way out of line in its repression of autonomy and independence agitators in Kashmir. It has allows its fear of a precedent of nationalist splitting and its anger at organized Pakistani support for the insurgency to overwhelm its sense of democratic practice. This is how it comes to substitute a harsh military approach for the requisite new thinking about a political solution to a problem - 'Kashmir' - that has brought nuclear or near-nuclear (whichever it is) India and Pakistan to three wars and could yet draw them into a vastly more deadly fourth.

What kind of solution? India's view is that it and Pakistan should work it out. This position rests on the Simla Agreement, which a victorious India imposed after its 1971 war with Pakistan. Opposed to this position, Pakistan takes recourse in the United Nations' 1948 call for a plebiscite (on accession to Pakistan or India) in the Muslim-dominated part of Kashmir that is here at issue. **Given the current global sensitivity to ethnic-based national movements, plebiscites have an undoubted appeal. But India rejects a plebiscite in this instance.**

The stalemate on Kashmir in a narrow context has led some to try to deal with the dangerous Indian-Pakistani tensions in a large context. The United States is now trying to get the two countries, plus Russia and China, to talk about nuclear restraint. Pakistan, eager to propitiate Washington and to break the arms-sale ban that Washington imposed for Pakistan's nuclear cheating, accepts the conference idea. India, lonely after the loss of its Soviet patron, is coming to it. At this point the agenda is vague, but it would be a breakthrough, and an achievement for American diplomacy, just to get the parties to sit down.

But even if the nuclear issue were submitted to international massage, there would still be an urgent requirement to treat Kashmir. Outsiders are much better placed to contribute to a new nuclear equation than to a Kashmir settlement. The separate formulas now favoured by India and Pakistan were designed more for international political jousting than for productive negotiation. Surely - perhaps in an atmosphere warmed by the onset of nuclear talks - the two countries could find something better. Meanwhile, they should be expected to lower the temperature in Kashmir, India by halting the repressions and Pakistan by stopping its stoking of the fire. *(Courtsey: Washington Post, 5 May)*

Sunanda K. Datta Ray writes about the nuances of

The US-India Embrace

Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, has reassessed India's strategic options. Pressure on several fronts forced him to do so, economic problems at home, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which had always supported India diplomatically and provided 70 per cent of its defense requirements and the virtual collapse of nonalignment, which had long provided a conceptual frame work for India foreign policy.

In a series of dramatic turn abouts, Mr Rao's Congress(1) Party government has taken major steps toward a market economy, voted to repeat the UN General Assembly's Zionism is racism resolution supported Western initiatives against Libyan terrorism, held naval exercises with Australia in the Indian Ocean, agreed to improve its chilly relations with Israel, and opened a dialogue with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. (ASEAN)

India needs loans from the International Monetary Fund, and it needs foreign investment. It has a shopping list of sophisticated weapons that only the United States can supply. New Delhi's primary interest in closer ties with Washington appears to be in a military supply relationship that would strengthen India's position as a regional power. The United States, on the other hand, appears to want broader, if discreet, security cooperation.

India with the third largest pool of scientists and engineers in the world, the fourth largest standing army, the ninth biggest industrial economy, a blue water navy and a large middle class, is an obvious choice as President Bush seeks partners to help fashion a new world order. The United States expects the partnership to uphold democratic values, safeguard human rights, curb the rise of religious fundamentalism, check narcoterrorism and keep the sea lanes open.

There remain important differences between India and the United States on issues such as trade regulations the role of multinational corporations, ballistic missile developments and nuclear non proliferation. But what really stands in the way of a strategic partnership is that New Delhi and Washington still do not share the same world view. Mr Rao believes that any new world order should concentrate less on arms control and human rights, and more on economic reform under global auspices, so that developing countries gain tangible benefits from the end of the Cold War.

REFLECTIONS

Cheque Book Diplomacy ?

Though the United States regards itself as the world leader it seems that it is increasingly unwilling or unable to pick up the bill for its leadership role.

In May, American Secretary of State, James Baker, reportedly spent much time trying to persuade Congress to approve the Bush administration's aid package for Russia. America's contribution, of just under a third of the total bill of $24 billion, appears to have little chance of Congress approval by June 16th, when President Boris Yeltsin comes to Washington, as lawmakers look over their shoulders at the coming elections.

Some observers have said that there is a growing paralysis in Washington: an inability to cut the budget deficit, a tendency to go by the opinion polls rather than to lead by moulding public opinion and an increasing willingness to blame the outside world, notably Japan, for America's problems.

Though the administration has spoken about a "new world order" of peace and security through increased reliance on international organisations, studies by the State and Defence Departments and the National Security Council have left the impression abroad that this amounts to American predominance with others footing much of the bill.

The President sees the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as the institutions to co-ordinate aid to the ex-Soviet republics. Yet he has still not lobbied Congress in person to approve an increase in American contributions.

The President sees the United Nations as a peace keeper around the world as part of the new order. Yet he has done little about paying America's $555m arrears to the main budget of the world organisation, or its unpaid dues of $112.3m for peacekeeping operations. Recently the US Treasury urged Germany to rein in its budget deficit, in order to ease international interest rates and help end the recession. Ignoring diplomatic niceties, the Germans reportedly told the Americans in no uncertain terms to put their own house in order before preaching to others.

US think-tanks are also sounding the retreat. The Council on Foreign Relations wants Bush to "reject universal security commitments". The conservative Heritage Foundation says that if the EC wants American forces to stay in Europe, it should foot the bill. **All these issues are expected to come up at the summit of the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations in June in Munich. Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the chairman, would like the summit to set the seal on a new partnership between Europe, America and Japan. If it all ends up as an argument over money, the stage will be set for cheque book diplomacy.**

In the 1930s, Mohamed Ali Jinnah remarked that the demand for Pakistan was a national question - and that therefore it was an international question. Ever since the Thimpu talks in 1985, the international dimension of the Tamil national liberation struggle has become increasingly open and manifest. The bottom line is that Sinhala chauvinism cannot succeed in its attempt to subjugate the Tamil people without aid and support from the international community. It is also true that, in the end, Tamil Eelam itself will need to secure broad international recognition. To address the international frame within which the Tamil national liberation struggle must perforce take shape, is therefore, not a matter of self indulgent luxury but a matter of immediate, direct and practical significance. The new balances that are being struck in the emerging multipolar world are not without relevance to the struggle of the people of Tamil Eelam. Again, if the 1950s and the 1960s were the decades of the anti colonial liberation movements, the 1990s will prove to be the decade of the post colonial national liberation movements. Self determination is not a mere phrase. Neither is it a dirty word. The political force that it generates has begun to prevail over the power of many existing state structures.

Gorbachev calls for India's inclusion in Security Council

In a speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, where 46 years ago Britains wartime leader, Winston Churchill warned of the 'Iron Curtain', former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev called for the inclusion of India in the United Nations Security Council. He said: "The great country of India should be represented in the council." The councils authority would also be enhanced, he said, by adding other countries such as Italy, Mexico, Egypt and Indonesia, even if they not initially possess veto power. New Delhi has been pressing for council membership since the warming of East-West relations and the break up of the Soviet Union. "It definitely means that India's status in the developing world is recognised" asserted Indian Ambassador Abid Hussain in an interview with India Abroad. "He feels that considering India's role in global peace and demilitarisation, it was necessary that 800 million people should get a share in decision making." *(Courtesy: India Abroad, 15 May)*

Post Bag

Dr.S.Raghunathan, writes from West Yorkshire, U.K. :

CONGRATULATIONS

May I congratulate you on improving the quality of your journal. You now focus your readers on the primary objective of the liberation of Eelam Tamils within the emerging New International Order - news and views. I do hope everyone of your readers would take note of contributions from Savitri, Arjun Katoch and Mr.N.–Sidamparapillai.

R.Shanmuganathan, writes from NSW, Australia:

APPRECIATION

This letter is long overdue. I have been planning to write it for a long time to express my appreciation, for bringing out the Tamil Nation, without interruption, following the arrest of Editor Mr.Sivanayagam. Considering the circumstances, publishing it without interruption and maintaining the high standards is no easy task and merits appreciation.

I have been reading the writings of Mr.Sivanayagam from the days of Saturday Review and have been an admirer ever since. His beautiful flowing style and his commitment has greatly helped to propagate the Tamil cause. Tamil nation under his editorship was blossoming into an extremely readable voice of the Tamil people. Alas! he was arrested and is being held incommunicado in the Tamil Nadu prison, saddening the Tamil people and so many other well wishers. Ajit Samaranayake's article (TN 3/92) brought tears to our eyes. I hope and pray that Mr. Sivanayagam will be released soon unharmed.

Some time back Tamil nation serialised articles on some aspects of social movement in Eelam under the British rule. These articles by Mr.Kadirgamar gave an insight into how our forefathers reacted to changes that were happening in the region; especially the Indian freedom movement. It will be interesting to know how the British viewed these developments and the related developments in Tamil Nadu and the Indian sub continent. Have these developments influenced British decision making on the form of government in Sri Lanka? The answer is not clear. It is also worth our while to take a fresh look at how our former leaders acted in this regard; whether they had vision, foresight etc. Sir Pon Ramanathan, Sir Pon Arunachalam, Arunachalam Mahadeva, G.G.Ponnamblam, Prof Suntharalingam and ofcourse Mr.S.J.V. Chelvanayagam are some of the more famous of our former leaders. I hope that articles from people having specialist knowledge on these subjects will be given space in your columns.

People say its is pointless looking back at events. Though I am not sure of this, I like to quote from an eminent person: 'If answers are to be found to the conflict in Sri Lanka, there must be an understanding of its history.' At this critical juncture it will help us to take stock and look at options.

Before I wind up, I like to register my strong desire to see peace and normal life returning to our homeland. Though this seems a distant prospect, as long as the Sri Lankan government pursues a policy of negotiation only if the military solution fails (that is subjugation/enslavement etc), I am not willing to throw brickbats, from afar, at those who have decided to make the supreme sacrifice to defend our people.

C Ramanathan, writes from Colombo, Sri Lanka:

WHAT PRICE RACISM?

Racism is racism whether it comes from a venerable but unenlightened Mahanayake Thero and his yellow-clad associates in Sri Lanka, who control the Sinhala government there; or from a bunch of white American jurors in Los Angeles who could see nothing wrong or illegal in white police officers brutalizing a black man on the streets of the city. Not long ago the world watched the horror spectacle of a peaceful city suddenly erupting into an inferno. They also saw the cause of that rage that had driven the Blacks to burn down their own city. A Black youth, Rodney King was being kicked, beaten and so brutally savaged by the white police that he rolled and writhed in agony like a human worm. Yet he could get no justice in America because he was a Black and the jurors were Whites. Black anger broke out. 700 million worth burnt down, about 50 dead and thousands injured, - the price of that racist acquittal.

Over the years Colombo has had similar bonfires - the worst ever was under JR's Dharmista government. The latest attempt to bring peace in Sri Lanka by Thondaman has been wrecked by the Mahanayakes. Thondaman wouldn't have put up the proposals before sounding President Premadasa. It is the intransigent bigotry of the Bhikku, a species of yellow fever, that keeps this madness going.

S. Gurunathan, writes from Canterbury, Australia

THE SUNDAY OBSERVER'S DOUBLE STANDARDS

The (Sri Lanka) Sunday Observer of March 15, in its editorial column 'Comment' has come down on the Canadian Government, for allowing the LTTE to operate on the Canadian soil. The editorial couched in widely used (and abused) words like narco-terrorists, human rights etc., has come out with a new fangled theory that Tamil Tigers' 'terrorists activities' have been the main cause for human rights violations in Sri Lanka. The grouse of the editorial writer was that the Canadian Government had allowed the LTTE to operate there, instead of kicking it out lock, stock and barrel.

If the editorial writer, while writing the editorial, hadn't had his blinkers on, then he would have known that:

(1) The first instance of human rights violations took place in 1949, when around 975,000 plantation Tamils were disenfranchised with the enactment of the Indo-Pakistani Citizenship Act.

(2) The second instance of human rights violations took place in 1956, when Tamil leaders who were staging peaceful satyagraha in front of the Parliament against the Sinhala Only Bill were attacked by Sinhalese thugs. The thugs were allowed a field day, while police were told not to interfere. The Tamil leaders were compelled to take to heels, with bleeding injuries and their clothing in shreds. Sinhalese politicians belonging to ruling party, the SLFP, watched those gory incidents laughing derisively, without realizing, within another 25 years, Tamil youths would take to arms, to give Sinhalese a taste of their own medicine. At Galoya in the Amparai District, terrorism at the behest of SLFP politicians was unleashed on Tamils, which resulted in the deaths of around 100 Tamils, while almost all the Tamil houses got looted.

(3) The third instance of human rights violations and terrorism of the first water directed against Tamils took place in 1958 during the racial riots. 'Emergency '58' by Tarzie Vitachi (who was the editor of the Sunday Observer in the 60's) gives a vivid account of naked terrorism that swept through Sinhalese dominated areas. The then Prime Minister, late Mr S W R D Bandaranaike, added fuel to raging terrorism by announcing over Radio Ceylon (now SLBC) that riots were caused by killing of Nuwara Eliya Mayor, Seniviratne in Amparai, a new item that was without any foundation. Here again, police were told not to raise their finger, till after five days, when the then Governor General, late Sir Oliver Goonatilake took charge of the situation.

Events of racial riots as 1977, 1981, and 1983 are too well-known that they do not need any elaboration here.

R.Seeiapah writes from Yorkshire after a recent visit to Sri Lanka

SRI LANKA - IN TURMOIL.

I was in Sri Lanka this April and returned during the first week of May.

At Katunayake, in city junctions, banks and Government buildings there were army personnel with all kinds of weapons. There is no doubt that the armed forces would have a vital influence on Governmental decisions as in Pakistan.

Disappearances are common, arbitrary arrests, detentions etc. occur every day and the rule of law is a farce. The Western Nations would add Sri Lanka to the dictatorial regimes in the Third World.

The JVP is nothing but the representative of dispossessed. As the gap between the rich and poor grows the resurgence of the JVP or the birth of a similar outfit is bound to happen.

Neither the Indian nor Sri Lankan army was able to defeat the LTTE. Before long the Sri Lankan Government, with the help of Aid Consortium countries, will come to learn that they cannot maintain genuine democracy with guns.

Power in Sinhala areas is shared by the President, the UNP and the SLFP. All other groups pale into insignificance. All these three groups retain their political base using the LTTE card. But not for long - sooner if not later an armed struggle will emerge in the South with the possibility of linking with those in the North and East.

What the Western donor countries fail to realise is that the will of the people in one form or another, be it in Viet Nam or Burma, cannot be defeated with armed forces. Even the "smart bombs" have failed to kill Saddam Hussein.

Superpower status is not permanent. Once Britain, France, and Spain ruled more than half of the World. Next USSR ruled a third of the world. The recent troubles in Los Angeles, strikes in Germany, the fall of Nikkei Index from 38,000 to 19,000 within two years indicate that USA, Germany and Japan may not hold their leading positions during the 21st century.

The break up of Eastern Europe was so swift that it took even their enemies by surprise.

Under the most trying conditions the LTTE still controls the Northern Province and has significant base in the Eastern Province. Their courage, dedication, devotion and discipline remains unparalleled. They might have reverses but they cannot be defeated.

Recently I read that the LTTE has support from Tamils in 32 countries. If anarchy and a blood bath in Sri Lanka are to be avoided President Premadasa should with the help of Secretary General of Commonwealth, the United Nations and countries like Switzerland move fast and bring about a cease fire in Sri Lanka, recognise the de facto LTTE control of the Northern Province and negotiate a settlement. Perhaps certain areas in the Eastern Province may haver to be annexed to adjacent Sinhala areas, and cantons like in Switzerland for Muslims throughout Sri Lanka be established.

The days of Sinhala jingoism (mainly fuelled by politicians) are numbered. Tamils world over are too powerful to be humiliated or defeated. Let Sri Lanka stand on its own feet and not depend on World Powers who may in the end, play only transitory roles.

LTTE responds to Peace Proposals

continued from page 3

tion, nor do they recognise the concrete reality of a historically constituted Tamil homeland. It is within this context that the LTTE has given careful consideration to the set of proposals submitted by you. While we appreciate your earnest effort in working out a set of proposals, we find your framework very sketchy, limited and inadequate failing to address the complex dimensions of the nationality issues. **The idea advanced by you of a common, all embracing, multi-ethnic homeland is unacceptable since it contradicts historical reality and contravenes the inalienable right of a people to their homeland.** We do not wish to make a detailed criticism of the proposals. But it is sufficient to observe that the framework fails to meet the basic demands and aspirations of our people. **Though these proposals are unsatisfactory, your pilgrimage of peace to Jaffna will have a positive and constructive role in creating a congenial condition of peace, goodwill and understanding between the two peoples. We hope that you will continue your peace efforts in the Noble Path of Lord Buddha.**

Behind the Ban

continued from page 1

I at Tirupati which adopted a resolution appealing to the centre to impose a ban on that organisation and also bring to book the assassins of Rajiv Gandhi. The resolution was moved by Human Resources Minister Arjun Singh. But highly placed sources say there is a sharp difference of opinion between the External Affairs Ministry and the Home Ministry as well, as between the two intelligence outfit, the Intelligence Bureau and the research and Analysis Wing (RAW) of the Cabinet Secretariat. The Law Ministry too is not clear how an outfit operating outside the country can be covered under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act.

The thinking in the External Affairs Ministry, as put forth by Foreign Secretary J N Dixit, is that any decision on the LTTE should not cost India in the long run. Dixit wants that New Delhi should not appear to be left without any lever in the island affairs since the Premadasa government is itself not averse to negotiations with the Tamil Tigers.

Voicing similar concern, the RAW has said the LTTE continues to have a great say in the northern parts of Sri Lanka even though it has been considerably weakened by sustained military operations.

A Ban on the LTTE , as a RAW official put it, may permanently close India's options which would be to the advantage of Sri Lanka as it explores the possibility of isolating India as it builds an axis involving Colombo, Dhaka and Islamabad to checkmate New Delhi's pre-eminence. When the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) tipped India's foreign officials about Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa talking to foreign diplomats about India states breaking up in the near future, there was considerable consternation.

The military intelligence too is not very enthusiastic about banning the LTTE though the advice of the Defence Ministry has been that there should be no let-up in the vigil on the Tigers, sources say. As the overwhelming opinion in these circles has been that the ban on the LTTE would be a short-term advantage and a long-term disadvantage, the Home Ministry and the IB have been very vehemently arguing in favour of a total ban on the LTTE.

Home Minister S B Chavan is understood to have told the Prime Minister that the ban should be effected without delay since the Tigers in Tamil Nadu, strongly called for the ban. So much so that M K Narayanan who recently retired as the director, IB, even bypassed the committee of secretaries to directly submit a report ion the LTTE to the PAC.

When the IB report was processed by the cabinet secretary, its recommendation was, 'moderated' sources say. The cabinet secretary in particular is understood to have pointed out to the Prime Minister the political implementations of the ban." *(Courtesy: Sri Lanka Sunday Island 10 May)*

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DEATHS

continued from page 15

Mayaroon & Mathini, son of Retired Post Masters K.Kanagasabai & Valliammai (Chavakachcheri) 18 York Road, Acton, London W3

Phyllis HENSMAN relict of late Dharmarajah, mother of Vima & Dhana 60 Muhandiram's Road, Kollupitiya

Dora Selvanesam NAVARATNAM, wife of E.D.Navaratnam (Lt Commander, SLN retired and presently with Messrs L.J.M.Peiris & Co), daughter of late Mr & Mrs Victor Paul of Araly North, mother of Edmund Navaratnam, Selvaranee Kirupakaran (Oman) and Dawn Jeyendran. G2/3 Anderson Flats, Colombo 5.

Paramaswamy PARARAJASINGHAM, Supt, Wewesse Group, Badulla, husband of Syamaladevi, eldest son of Dr & Mrs Paramaswamy, brother of Pushpam, Anandhan, Dr Parsuraman, Dr Paramsothy Pushpavathy, Pushpavanam, Pushparatnam, Aruchunan, Parameswaran, Pushpadevi, Rukamani, Paramasivam & Lalitha (all of Australia) 16 Clifford Place, Colombo 4.

Ananthawally SINNATHAMBY, wife of late Sinnathamby (SS), mother of Dakshini Devi, Kanagarani, Bakirathan (Canada), Visalatchy & Aanathakumary (Canada) Sabaratnam Lodge, Thirunelvely North, Jaffna

Dr S.BALASUBRAMANIAM Professor of Botany, University of Peradeniya, husband of Maheswaridevi, son of the late Mr & Mrs S.Sinnathamby, brother of Mathanaranjini, Maruthapuraveegavalli, Nithialixshmi & lat Mahaluxshmi. 27/3 Peterson Lane, Wellawatte.

Dr Sinnathamby SELVARAJAH of 16 Palam Rd, Kandermadam, Jaffna & Vaddukoddai, husband of Thanaledchumy, father of Dr Yoganathan (UK), Dr Yogaranjitham Navaratnam, Mrs Jeya Ranjitham, Esvaranathan (Accountant UK)

Dr Stanley Jayaratnam BARTLETT (64), husband of Dr Parimalam Bartlett nee Selvadurai, father of Narendranath, Sooriakumaran & Rajendran, son of the late Proctor J.Thambiah Bartlett & Mrs Florence Bartlett, brother of Pathma Canagasabai, late Kamala Walton, Rajah, Saba, Dr Navam, Leela Aiyadurai, Leslie, Mahes Dharmarajah & Vimala Navaratnam 95 Joseph Lane, Invercargill, South Island, New Zealand.

Nalliah RADHAKRISHNAN, son of late V.Nalliah (MP) & Thangaratnam nee Muthiah, brother of Nalini Kasinathan, Sivakumaran & Sooriyakumaran, all of Australia. Funeral Kanatte May 17.

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BOOK REVIEW

Freedom from Fear and Other Writings, by Aung San Suu Kyi, edited by Michael Aris, Penguin Books, London, 1991, 338pp. paperback US$12.00, UK£6.99

Everyone has an opinion about the Nobel Peace Prize. In my view, this particular Nobel prize is a big equalizer.

While other Nobel prizes are awarded to specialists who have excelled in a particular discipline (chemistry, physics, medicine, literature and economics), only the Nobel Peace prize provides an opportunity for other folks to be nominated and recognized as having contributed something significant to the mankind. Therefore, the Nobel Peace laureates belong to a medley of 'heavy weights' and mediocrities.

They include social workers (Jane Addams and Mother Teresa), power peddlers (Henry Kissinger), scientists (Linus Pauling), politicians (Oscar Arias Sanchez and Mikhail Gorbachev), one-time "terrorists" (Menachem Begin), clerics (Desmond Tutu and Dalai Lama) and social activists (Martin Luther King).

The last to win the Nobel Peace prize. Suu Kyi, can be identified as a social activist, for the simple reason that she does not belong to any other professional category. The book Freedom from Fear, is the compilation of her published writings, which has been edited by her British husband, Michael Aris. The Czechoslovakian leader Vaclev Havel, who nominated Suu Kyi for the Nobel Peace prize, has written a short foreword to the book.

What kind of a person is Suu Kyi? She was privileged to be born in 1945 as the daughter of the then Burma's independence leader Aung San. In this sense, she shares a commonality with Indira Gandhi. However, in terms of age, family background and the personal tragedy they experienced in losing their fathers while being young, I believe that Suu Kyi shares much with Chandrika Bandaranaike. **Even the political careers of SWRD Bandaranaike and Aung San show some surprising parallels.**

Twenty five documents constitute the body of this book. Of these 25, four were authored by colleagues who have known Suu Kyi either personally or professionally. Among the remaining 21 documents, four pieces constitute the "meaty material". These were written while the author was residing in Oxford, Kyoto and Simla, and published between 1984 and 1990. The themes of these four essays relate to Myanmar.

The first was on her father, Aung San. The second was a general introduction on Myanmar, captioned "My Country and People". The third one analyses the "intellectual life in Burma and India under colonialism". The fourth essay relates to the literature and nationalism in Myanmar.

The editor, Michael Aris, notes in his introduction that the majority of the assembled writings (a total of 17) are "a medley of later essays, speeches, letters and interviews resulting from her (Suu Kyi's) involvement in the struggle for human rights and democracy in her country". The author begins the titular essay. 'Freedom from Fear' (1991), by revising the well known dictum of Lord Acton on power. According to Suu Kyi, "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it". Even in this essay, Suu Kyi relates to the deeds done by her father Aung San to his country, and compares him with Mahatma Gandhi.

About Aung San, the author writes, "Always one to practise what he preached, Aung San himself constantly demonstrated courage - not just that physical sort but the kind that enabled him to speak the truth, to stand by his word, to accept criticism, to admit his faults, to correct his mistakes, to respect the opposition, to parley with the enemy and to let people be the judge of his worthiness as a leader". This sounds similar to a toddler writing about her "lovely daddy". It is understandable because Suu Kyi lost her father tragically, while she was just a two-year toddler. For an impartial analysis of what Aung San's role in the independence movement of Burma, one needs to read the essay of the noted British anthropologist Edmund Leach, published in the journal Daedalus of winter 1973.

In that analytical essay entitled. "Buddhism in the post-colonial political order in Burma and Ceylon", Edmund Leach saw parallels between the dynamic careers and tragic deaths of SWRD Bandaranaike (1899-1959) and Aung San (1915-1947). His observations on these two "practical politicians" are worth quoting in some detail.

Leach noted, "...Contrary to legend, the Burma Independence Army, which Aung San then organized, was originally an insignificant group to which the Japanese offered little support. It is extremely doubtful whether this 'army' ever engaged in any form of combat... In the spring of 1945, Aung San, who had previously been denounced by the British authorities as a dangerous traitor, was suddenly recognized by Admiral Mountbatten as 'the leader of anti-Japanese resistance in Burma'. Without this recognition Aung San would very likely have disappeared without a trace.

The subsequent build up of Aung San's reputation as 'Burma popular hero' was very elaborately engineered... Aung San was certainly a devoted patriot, but he was also an opportunist and a very practical politician... In any event, both Bandaranaike and Aung San seem to have perished because having ridden tom power on the crest of a militant Buddhist nationalist wave, they would both have liked to reach some compromise agreement with the kind of Western ';modern' society which, in their hearts, they both really admired."

Suu Kyi, in the introduction of her 36-page essay on "My Father" (1984) has noted, "My father died when I was too young to remember him. It was an attempt to discover the kind of man he had been that I began to read and collect material on his life. The following account is based on published materials...". However, what I found somewhat amusing is that, Suu Kyi has not referred to the above-mentioned 1973 publication of Edmund Leach or even cited this particular research publication by the noted anthropologist. After all Edmund Leach is not an obscure scholar in Britain, and Daedalus is also not a mediocre journal. Has Suu Kyi been too sensitive to criticism about her father's role in the colonial Burma? Edmund Leach compares U Saw who was implicated in the assassination of Aung San and hanged in May 1948, with Buddharakkhita Thero, the master-mind behind Bandaranaike's murder.

Edmund Leach concluded his comparison of Aung San and Bandaranaike as follows: "The point that I want to emphasize in the careers of Bandaranaike and Aung San and the careers of their murderers is not the cynicism involved in rapid changes of faith and political allegiance, or the corrupt immorality of the outstanding Ceylonese and Burmese politics make behaviour such as Bandaranaike's not merely appropriate but essential. In one way or another almost every successful operator ion the field of politics in either Ceylon or Burma during recent decades has attempted (sometimes with considerable but shortlived success) to exploit Buddhist religious enthusiasms in the interest of party politics...". Suu Kyi has not explored this territory in any of her writings in the book. And this is regrettable.

"In one way or another almost every successful operator ion the field of politics in either Ceylon or Burma during recent decades has attempted to exploit Buddhist religious enthusiasms in the interest of party politics.."

In conclusion, despite some rave reviews about this book in the international press, I am of the opinion that this selection of the writings of Suu Kyi shows evidence as a hastily assembled production. We need to wait for a while to learn, how the incarceration currently being experienced by Suu Kyi, has influenced her political thoughts in a prolific way. One last comment about the incarceration of Suu Kyi. Though not to cast aspersions on her courage to withstand the rigours of prison life, one should note that at least she has the fortune to be alive and "treated with respect" by the military authorities in Myanmar. Some other Gandhian activists in the past who underwent the same experience were not so lucky. Though deserving (by virtue of immersing themselves to the Gandhian way of struggle for a longer period of time than Suu Kyi), they were not awarded the Nobel Peace prize. For example, Mahatma Gandhi's own wife, Kasturba Gandhi died in Yeravda jail in Feb 1944 at the age of 75 years. And there is no doubt that Kasturba was the first woman to practise the Gandhian way of struggle. In 1983, Eelam Tamil Gandhian activist Rajasundaram and his colleagues were murdered in the Weikade jail. These facts prove how a Nobel Peace prize can bestow credibility to the writings of an individual.

Reviewed by Sachi Sri Kantha

Iyal, Isai, Nadagam

Culture is the distilled essence of the way of life of a people. In the case of the Tamil people the distillation process has spanned a time period of more than two thousand years. It is a culture which is reflected in so many of the things that we do unconsciously. It is reflected in our cuisine, in our dress forms, in the way in which greet each other, in our language and in our beliefs. It is a rich culture which has found vibrant expression in our literature, in our songs and in our dances. It is a living culture which has grown by interacting with other cultures but which at the same time has given much and has much to give to the world. It is a living culture which also serves to cement the increasing togetherness of more than 50 million Tamils living in many lands and across distant seas.

Reflections on Tamil Poetry

Very early Tamils developed the passion for classification which is noticeable in many aspects of ancient Indian learning. Poetry was divided into two main groups: 'internal' (agam) and 'external' (puram). A unique feature of Tamil poetry is the initial rhyme or assonance. This does not appear in the earliest Tamil literature but by the end of the Sangam period it was quite regular. The first syllable or syllables of each couplet must rhyme. This initial assonance, in some poems continued through four or more lines, is never to be found in the poetry of Sanskrit languages, or as far as we know, in that of any other language. Its effect, a little strange at first, rapidly becomes pleasant to the reader, and to the Tamil it is as enjoyable as the end rhyme of Western poetry. - *Professor A.L.Basham in Wonder that was India*

Bharatha Natya Arangetram of Mythila and Mythri Jegatheesan in Connecticut

The Bharatha Natya Arangetram of **Mythila** and **Mythri**, daughters of **Dr. & Dr. (Mrs.) K.Jegathesan** was staged at the Holy Cross High School Auditorium in Waterbury, Connecticut on May 2 before an audience of around a thousand persons. Mythila and Mythri are disciples of Mrs. Niranthari Ketheecharan and Padmasri Adyar Lakshman. The Chief Guest at the Arangetram was Swami Satchithananda. Nattuvangam was by Sri Adyar Lakshman, vocal by Smt.Nagamani Srinivasa Rao, violin by Smt. Gomathi Sundaram, Mridangam by Sri K.Gopinath, Veena by Smt.Ranganayaki Srinivasan and Flute by Dr.W.V.Panchacharam.

Dravida Cultural Association of Australia

1991 Kavithai & Essay Competition Awards

The prizewinners in the 1991 Kavithai and Essay Competition organised by the Dravida Cultural Association of Australia were given their awards during the Inisai Malai concert held in Melbourne in March this year. The prizewinners in the Kavithai section were: First Prize - Mrs. Padma Rayarajeswaran; Second Prize - Mr. M.P. Seviyar(Queensland); and the Third Prize - Mrs. Percy Ponmalar Alfred. The Prizewinners in the Essay competition were: First Prize - Mrs. Uma Ravichandran; Second Prize - Mr.Appudurai; Third Prize - Mrs. Shantha Jeganathan Consolation Prizes were also awarded to the following: Miss Sakila Subramaniam, Elever Kulali, Mrs. Shanmugalingam, Jeyachanthiran, Mr.N.Mahesan (Sydney) and Mr. Prabakaran (Sydney)

"Illakiya Chemmal" awards

Four pioneer Tamil writers, Messrs S D Sivanayagam, R K Sivagurunathan, N Muttiah and Ilankeeran won the top "Illakiya Chemmal" awards at the final section of the five day Tamil Literary Festival held at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute in Colombo, on 10th May.

Children's Ramayana at South London Tamil School

It was a pleasant experience to have watched the little children of South London Tamil School in Croydon dramatise the great epic of Ramayanam in fluent Tamil at the South Norwood Education Centre on 9 May. Those who had watched the previous three episodes of this play during the last two years were were captivated by the final episode of Rama's Pattabhishekam which literally "crowned" the play. A pleasant surprise at this year's performance was the introduction of songs as an integral part of the drama. The dramatisation was based on the operatic version of the Ramayanam by the famous nineteenth century poet, Seerkazhi Arunachala Kavirayar. The decor and costumes blended in an attractive whole and the dance sequences were interwoven seamlessly to add tempo and cohesion. In the last scene where Raman and Sithai arrive in a procession to enter the city of Ayodhya, the procession passed along the aisle of the auditorium. Amongst the cast, it would be invidious to select some for praise, particularly because it was evident that every one had put in a lot of hard work. However, Raman, Sithai, Lakshmanan, Ravanan, Mandothari Hanuman clearly attracted the audience. The little monkeys won the hearts of all. The play was produced and directed by Mrs. G Sivapathasundaram. ***Reviewed by Rasikan***

M.Thanapalasingham writes from Sydney about

5th International Conference on Tamil Culture

The 5th International Conference on Tamil Culture will be held in Sydney on 3,4 & 5 October 1992 at the University of New South Wales. The Conference theme will be "The Changing Face of Tamil Culture in Australasia".

The conference is being organised by a 12 member Coordinating Committee in conjunction with the International Movement for Tamil Culture in Malaysia and New Zealand and Tamil organisations in all States & Territories of Australia and other Pacific Nations. The Coordinating Committee is chaired by Dr.N.–Sriskandarajah with Mr.S.Balendra as Conference Secretary. Keynote addresses by guest speakers will set the theme for each day's sessions. These will be followed by symposia, panel discussions, poetry readings and exhibitions. The evenings will be devoted to cultural events. Persons interested in obtaining further information may contact M.Thanapalasingham at P.O.Box 215, Enfield, NSW 2136 or ICTC 92, P.O.Box S60, Homebush South, NSW 2140, Australia

K.Sivarajah writes from Norway

Cooperation between Jaffna & Tromso Universities

Mr.K.Sivarajah, Coordinator of the Tamil Development Newtwork of Norway, who also functioned as Chairman of the ROOT Seminar on Development in London in 1990 writes:

On the initiative of Tamils living in Tromso, Norway, a Co-operation between the University of Jaffna and the University of Tromso (the northernmost University in the World) is being mooted. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Jaffna, Professor A.Thurairajah visited Tromso in April and had discussions with the University of Tromso. Fisheries will be given top priority in the planned activities. During Professor Thurairajahs visit, the Tamil Association of Tromso, Tamil Students and Academic Network in North Norway and Tamil Development Network of Norway had discussions about the role Tamils in Norway can play in the rehabilitation and development of Tamil homelands and decided:

1. Tamils and Tamil organisations will support grassroots organisations operating in the Tamil homelands.

2. Tamils in Norway will buy one off set printing machine for the University of Jaffna. This will cost one million Sri Lankan rupees. The Tamil Association of Tromso has taken the responsibility to collect the money among Tamils in Norway. Already Rs.500,000 has been committed.

3. An 'Unregular' Newsletter to link (network) globally all interested in the rehabilitation and development of Tamil homelands will be mooted. Tamil Development Network has taken the responsibility to implement this project. (Contact address: Sondre Tollbugt.2, 9008 Tromso, Norway.)

Music Maestro 'T.V.G.' to visit UK

Sangeetha Vidyarathna T.V. Gopalakrishnan of Madras will be visiting England in August 1992. He was in the U.K. in 1990 in connection with the well acclaimed Mridangam Arangetram of the eight year old Marino Kumarathasan. Known popularly as T.V.G. he celebrates his 60th birthday on 11 June 1992. This year is also his golden jubilee in the music world. Starting his career as a percussionist in Mridangam at the age of six, T.V.G. has today become a successful vocalist in both Carnatic and Hindustani music. He has over the years helped many a young artiste to grow and mature into well known musicians. T.V.G has toured all over the world as a Cultural Ambassador and has participated in many International Festivals. The Federation of City Sabhas in Madras as well as Rasika has organised a function to felicitate T.V.G on 11 June 1992.

Lectures on Gita

The Vedanta Life Institute cordially invites friends to a series of lectures in English by **Swami Parthasarathy on the Bhavad Geeta, Chapter III** on 25-28 June 1992, daily from 7.30 to 9 p.m. at the Hindu Centre, 39 Grafton Terrace, Chalk Farm, London N.W.5. **For further information, please contact M.Theagarajah at 081-864-4596**

People & Events

Ceylon Tamil Association of Victoria says 'thank you' to Rev Richard Wooton

On Saturday 11 April 1992, the Ceylon Tamil Association of Victoria, entertained to dinner at the Yarraville Club Hall, Australian 'Friends of the Tamils'. The chief guests were Rev. Richard and Mrs Betty Wooton.

The dinner was attended by about 250 persons, about half of whom were members, and the other half were Australians who in some way or another had helped the Tamil community or the Tamil cause. Rev. Wooton was retiring after ten years as Director of the Division of Social Justice of the Uniting Church. During this time he had been a valiant fighter for human rights in every part of the world. The Tamil community found in him a friend aware of the genocide in Sri Lanka. His letters to various organisations and personalities, his participation in numerous conferences, his publication 'Tamil Update' - all had all left their mark. Though vilified in the Sri Lankan Press, he had continued undaunted.

Tributes to him and Betty were paid at the dinner by Senator Sid Spindler (of the Democrats), Senator Barney Cooney (who also represented the Hon. Minister of Immigration Mr Gerry Hand), Mr Alan Mathisson (of the ACTU), Mr Alex Kruger (of the Uniting Church) and Prof. C J Eliezer (on behalf of the Tamil community).

Among those present, were Senator Richard and Megs Alston, Hon. Peter Staples MP, and Jeanette Burke, Hon. Jean McLean (of the Victorian Parliament), Mr Dimitris Dollis MP (of Racial Vilification Board) and Mrs Dollis, Mr Lewis Kent (former MP), the mother of Adele Balasingham, ministers of churches, and active workers for human rights and multi culturalism. The President of the CTA, Mr J T N Handy, presided. Photo shows Rev Wooton, his wife, Betty after being garlanded, together with Mrs Nesa Eliezer who was Mistress of Ceremonies.

Deaths

Death Notices and Obituaries in the Tamil Nation are published free of charge as a service to the Tamil diaspora - dispersed as they are across many lands and distant seas. Notices and Obituaries for publication may be sent direct to the Tamil Nation in UK at P.O.Box 417, Cambridge CB3 9LZ, Fax (0223) 355431; in Australasia at P.O.Box 623, Mulgrave North, Victoria 3170, Australia, Fax(03) 560 7739; and in USA at 23 Tamidan Road, Poughkeepsie NY 1261, Fax (914) 485 5865

S.SELLATHURAI (80) husband of Gunam nee Thampu, father of Dr. Lakshmi Karthigesu, New Zealand, Padmini Thurairajah, Canada, Dr.Saji Weerasinghe, New Zealand, Dr.Krishna Sellathurai, Australia, Mrs. Vasanthi Perinbanayagam, New Zealand and Nanda Sellathurai, London, died 2nd June.No.1, Todman Avenue, Strethfield, Sydney, NSW 2135.

Dr. Daniel A. THAMOTHERAM (82), eldest son of the late Gate Mudaliar N.N.Thamotheram and Mrs Alagamma Thamotheram nee Niles, husband of Pathma nee Proctor, father of Dharini, Nandhini, Luxmi, Kumaran & Kumudini, brother of Wesley & Vincent, died after a heart attack while attending a Medical Conference at the Hilton Hotel, Kuala Lumpur.

Maheswary MATHER, widow of Wilmot Mather, formerly of Uduvil Road, Manipay, mother of Bobby (Canada), Wilma (Australia), Indran (Madras) Rajan (France) and Priya (Canada) expired on 25th May 1992. Mrs. Mather had her entire education at Chundikuli Girls College, where she subsequently taught for awhile. Later she taught at Uduvil Girls High School and at Memorial English School, Manipay.

Viola Thevamalar SIVANATHAN, wife of late R.Sivanathan, daughter of late Dr. & Mrs. A.R.Rasiah of Kokuvil; mother of Mehala Vijayakumar (UK), Nirmalan (SL), Kalpana Cruz (UK) & Ranjit (SL); sister of Pearl Navaratnam, Atputham Rajaratnam & Chandran Nelson (all of USA); sister in law of late Annaledchumy Theagarajah, Leelavathy Sivasubramaniam (Sydney), R.S.–Nadarajah (Sydney), Saraswathy Parameswaran (V'Ponne), Mangaleswari Sivarasa (W'Watte), Kamaleswari Thirunavukarasu (Tambaram) & Amirthavalli Ganeshanathan (Wellington, NZ) passed away on 25 May at Hammersmith Hospital, London - 43 Jeymer Drive Greenford.

Dr. Manoharan NADARAJAH, husband of Indranee nee Aiyathurai (teacher, Ellen Wilkinson School, Ealing), father of Suthharan & Vaseeharan, formerly of the Ceylon Government Medical Service and recently Medical Officer in Kaduna, Nigeria and working in the Psychiatric Unit of Bedford Hospital, died in a tragic car accident on 29 May. 52 Marnham Crescent, Greenford.

Miss K.CHARAVANAMUTTU - Retired Principal, Vadamaradchi Girls Hindu College, Pt Pedro; daughter of the late Sinnathamby and Annamma Saravanamuttu of Ariyalai, Jaffna; sister of the late Arulamma Somasundaram, Paramsothy Sab–aratnam, Dr Paramanathan and of Dr Thanabalasingam and Jegasothy Navaratnarajah. 2831/1 Ruwan Mawatha, off Thimbirigasyaya Rd, Colombo 5.

Nadarajah CHELLIAH Retired Customs Officer, expired Toronto. 2980 Don Mills Road, Apt No 611, Willowdale, Ontario M2J 3b9, Canada.

Dr Michael Arulkumar ARULANANTHAM (Medical Officer, Chest Hospital, Welisara) son of Mr S.A.Arulanantham and late Roase Arulanantham, brother of Marian and Nirmala (UK), Dr Bernarda (USA) and Amala Shanti, nephew of Rev.–Fr.Michaelsamy OMI (Vicar General, Jaffna)

Pushpalakshmi SITTAMPALAM Attorney at Law, daughter of late Mr & Mrs C.Sittampalam, sister of Devalakshmi Balasundaram, Dr Arjuna Sittampalam (UK) Yogalakshmi (UK) & Malllikalakshmi. 5 Castle Lane, Colombo 4.

Pauline Retnam THAMBIPILLAI of Karampon, Kayts. Wife of the late S.M.Thambipillai, mother of Victor (UK), Xavier (Canada), Lalitha (UK), late Rajan, Balanathan (France) and late Rathini. 24 St Lucia's St, Kotahena, Colombo 13.

Kathleen Ranjithamalar RASANAYAGAM ("Aunty Kathy," Montessori Teacher, St Lawrence School, Wellawatte), daughter of late V.A.–Albert & Kirupaiammah, sister of Malar, Jeyam, Rasa & Rajah. 136/1 George R de Silva Mawatha, Colombo 13.

Kanagam Rose RICHARDS wife of the late Dr David Chinniah Richards, mother of the late Leela Ariaratnam, the late Pathwa Selvaratnam, David Kanaganayagam, Rev James Ratnanayagam, Emmanuel Jeyarajah, Francis Selvarajah and Sita Wijayarajah.

Shyamala Damayanthi JAYARATNAM (Staff, Kingston International College, Bambalapitiya, daughter of Mr & Mrs R.J. Jayaratnam of Pathawathai, Illavalai; sister of Anton Ravindran (Univ of Texas), Christie Reshekaron, Benno Niranjanan (London), Eric Sathiendran (Canada), Manjula Dushiyanthi & Allan Dushyanthan, died under tragic circumstances.

Kailasapillai KANDASAMY (Retired Vice-Principal of Jaffna Central College) husband of Manonemany nee Tamber, father of Jeyashaker (UK), Vijeshaker (UK), Mythily, Thayalashanker & Koushik. 36 Initium Road, Dehiwala.

Mahesan NAMASIVAYAM, formerly of Koddady & Mercantile Credit, Jaffna, husband of Manoranjitham, father of Namasivayam (Ramana), Ranjithamalar, Murugesan, Arjunan, Nagulan, Umayal, Sahathevan & kaman, died in Perth.23 Montrose St, Lynwood, W.Australia 6155

Balasingham DHARMALINGAM, Chief Administrative Officer, Palace Medical Services, Oman & retired Sri Lanka Administrative Service (Assistant Comissioner of Labour, Colombo), husband of Arunthathy, father of Jayanthi, Damayanthi, Dr Arjun & Geetha. 35 Castle Lane, Colombo 4

Nagalingam BALASUBRAMANIAM of Kondavil and retired Overseer, Badulla, expired in Calcutta. Husband of Kanmoney, father of Bala Murali, Bala Meera, Bala Sahini & Bala Sakthi, all of UK. Brother of Ambalavanar, Vigneswari Canagasuriyar, late Ruthrasingham, Selvamalar and Wimaladevi. 30 Drake Road, Harrow, Middx. HA2 9EA.

Shadrach Priyadarshan THAMOTHERAM Son of Mervyn and Rohini Thamotheram, grandson of the late Sountharam and of Mrs Blossom Thamotheram (Norway), and of Mr & Mrs C.B.Pushparajah.

Sivakumaran RAJARATNAM Advocate son of late Mr & Mrs D.–Rajaratnam of Trincomalee, husband of Lalitha, father of Shantha (UK), Sanjay, Sujeeva and Rajeev, father-in-law of Muhuntha Kumar (UK) 6 Rohini Road, Wellawatte

Chelliah SIVASAMPU (Retired PWD) husband of late Mankayarkarsy, father of Bremakumar & Suriyakumar. 15 Wolsey Way, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 1XQ, UK

Kanagasabai MANOCHANDRA (Engineer UK) expired in Colombo. Husband of Manimekaladevi, father fo

continued on page 13

APPOINTMENT

Dr Jayanathan Namasivayam has taken up duties as Consultant Radiologist, Whipps Cross Hospital, London E11, from 1st May 1992.

LONDON LAW SOCIETY WINTER EXAM RESULTS

Among the candidates who qualified as Solicitors were the following:- **P.P.Arulampalam, U. Duraisingham, M. Gengatharan, T. Kumaramoorthy, N. Mahendra, J.R. Mariathasan, R. Perumal, J.A.Rajakariar, J.C.Santhiapillar, C.Sivaguru**

Victoria Tamil Juniors in Cricket Finals

The Junior Vic Tamils (8to14 years) cricket team convincingly beat the Gujerat Juniors to qualify for the India Cup Cricket Finals to be played shortly in Melbourne. The team was coached by Navaratnam Thiagarajah. The picture shows (ltor) standing - M.Mahadeva, G.Premanath, N.Rajarvbendra, N.Rajadurai, M.Puvirajasingham; sitting - N.Prabakaran, B.Mahendrarajah, G.Haran, R.Prabakaran, D.Danials, S.Sriskandarajah.

LOOKING AHEAD

June

12 Friday
Piradhosha Viratham
First Day of International Federation of Tamils' (ITF) Photographic Exhibition "Puthumai Penn" at Westminster Central Hall, London SW1H 9NH from 1 p.m.to 9p.m.

13 Saturday
Second Day of ITF Photographic Exhibition from 9 a.m..to 8 p.m.

19 Friday
Sathoorthy Viratham

21 Sunday
Shashdi Viratham
Father's Day (UK)
Fourth Anniversary of International Foundation - Lunch and talk by Christopher Morris on "Ground Realities in the North & East" at Putney Leisure Centre, London, SW15

24 Wednesday
Kavignar Kannathasan Birthday

26 Friday
Ekathasi Viratham

28 Sunday
London Tamil Congregation services move to Rivercourt Methodist Church King Street, Hammersmith

30 Tuesday
Amavasai Viratham

July

2 Thursday
Madu Festival Day

4 Saturday
Saint Manikkavasagar Kurupooja

6 Monday
Nadesar Aani Uthira Dharshanam

10 Friday
Ekathasi Viratham

18 Saturday
6.30pm West London Tamil School Annual Prize Giving at Greenford Hall

26 Sunday
4.00 pm London Tamil Congregation 20th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service Dinner and Cultural Evening at Rivercourt Methodist Church, Hammersmith Further particulars from Rajan Rajaratnam, LTC Secretary 0895 271421 or Vathany Thangiah, Social Secretary 081 688 2503

Matrimonial Advertisement

Jaffna Catholic parents seek partner who is qualified, of good character, and under 33 years of age for daughter, 25 years of age, fair, attractive and educated in German language, with permanent residence in Germany. All applications will be treated in confidence. Write with details to K104, c/o Tamil Forum Ltd., P.O.Box 373, Croydon, Surrey, CR9 6AB, United Kingdom

TAMIL NATION

Thondaman says that he will try again

Minister & CWC leader S Thondaman pledged that he would do everything possible to find a solution to the North East crisis, through the Select Committee but if it failed, he said he would take another initiative to go to Jaffna on peace mission. "Nobody can stop me now that a Buddhist delegation has also visited Jaffna on a peace mission" he said.

Rule of Law - New Delhi Style

Rajiv murder trial to be held in secret, in a prison and 12 of the accused are dead!

After several rounds of talks with the Indian Home Ministry, the Special Investigation Team officials have decided to establish the Special Court for the Rajiv murder trial within the premises of the Chengalpattu Jail itself. In a further development, on an application by SIT, the Special Judge appointed to hear the Rajiv case under the notorious Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA), ordered on 20 May that no lawyer or witness involved in the court proceedings should speak to any outsider about the proceedings. The charge sheet in the case was filed on 20 May when only the lawyers were present and the public and the press were debarred from entering the court house. News of the charge sheet released from SIT sources indicates that the charge sheet contains statements of 1044 witnesses and the statements of the accused could run into over 1000 pages. **41 accused have been charged, but of this number only 29 are alive. Legal circles say that this is perhaps the first instance in legal history that dead persons have been charged with criminal offences.** It appears that the fundamental principle of natural justice that no one shall be condemned without being heard has been suspended for the duration of the Rajiv murder trial - the dead ofcourse cannot speak, leave alone defend themselves. But, that is not the only rule of law to be thrown overboard in the Rajiv murder trial. Justice must not only done but must be seen to be done. 'Justice' meted out in secret, away from the public gaze, by a special judge, appointed under a special law, and that too in a special court house within the precincts of a prison, is no justice at all. New Delhi should not be surprised if the world sees the whole charade as a political act on a par with the Moscow show trials of 1936.

Christopher Thomas writing from Madras in the London Times says:

LTTE hierarchy's involvement in Rajiv assassination has not been established

Forty one people were charged in Madras on 20 May in connection with the assassination a year ago today of Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister. However, only 29 of the accused are still alive; four died in the same bomb blast and others have committed suicide, some by swallowing cyanide.

Investigators have been hurrying to prepare the charges for the anniversary. A lengthy trial is due to start in August or September at a specially redesigned court-cum-prison near Madras.

One of the accused is Velupillai Prabhakaran, leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who is in a hideout in the jungles of Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka. India has consistently accused the Tigers of carrying out the assassination, but the Tigers have always denied it. It is certainly clear that the suicide bomber, a woman called Dhanu, and others who were killed or committed suicide, had been associated with the separatist movement. But whether they were working under orders from the organisation's hierarchy has not been established.

Despite the presumption of guilt reflected in government statements and newspaper editorials, there is a minority view in Madras and elsewhere that those who masterminded the operation may have been disaffected Tigers not working for the organisation. Samuel Rajappa, bureau chief in Madras for the Statesman said he was "convinced that the Tigers did not kill Gandhi." The Tigers would have known that they would have been severely hurt by the political backlash.

Mr.Rajappa said it was impossible for the Indian press in the present atmosphere to write about the possibility that other groups or individuals might have been behind the killing. "They could be accused of being pro Tiger. Not many journalists are willing to stick their necks out." *(Courtesy: London Times, 21 May)*

'Towards a Just Peace' Seminar in Melbourne

Around 100 Eelam Tamils participated in a whole day seminar/ workshop 'Towards a Just Peace', organised by the Ceylon Tamil Association (CTA) of Victoria at the Monash University on 9 May. In addition to members of the CTA, participants included representatives from Tamil Associations in other Australian States.

The Seminar was chaired by Professor C.J.Eliezer, Chairman of the Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations.

Mr.K.Seevanayagam gave a background briefing on the issues that confront the struggle of the people of Tamil Eelam. Mr.S.P. Arundavarajah spoke on the 'Tamil National Identity' and Dr.P.Sathianathan on the 'Right to Self Determination'. The other main speakers included Mr.S.Daniel on the 'Right to Secede'; Mr.Rajah Wilson on the ' Eelam Demand in the Emerging New World Order'; Mrs.Nimalini Ambikaipalan on the '13th Amendment & the Provincial Councils Act'; Mr.K.Somasunderam on the 'Thondaman Proposals'; Mr.J.T.N.Handy on 'International Initiatives Towards Peace'; Mr.S.Paramsothy on 'Co-existence with Equality'; and Mr.Ana Pararajasingham on 'Towards a Just Peace - Perceptions, Realities and Search for Associative Structures'.

Amongst the issues considered in the workshop were the following: 'Pre-requisites for Peace Negotiations'; 'Fundamental Basis for Settlement'; 'Security of the Tamil Nation'; and 'Terms of a Political Setlement.' The Resolution adopted at the conclusion of Seminar, recognised that the people of Tamil Eelam have the right to self determination and the right to freely choose their political status, including the right to freely associate with or disassociate from, other people and called upon the two parties to the conflict, the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

1. to express their willingness to enter into an internationally guaranteed agreement to secure an associative structure within which the Sinhala people and the Tamil people may live in peace and in freedom; 2. to express their willingness to engage a mutually acceptable neutral mediator; 3. to express their willingness to suspend all military operations throughout Tamil Eelam, and to initiate immediate negotiations for a comprehensive definitive cease-fire to be monitored by mutually acceptable observers; 4. to provide facilities for humanitarian agencies to directly undertake relief and rehabilitation work in Tamil Eelam; and further, called upon the Sri Lankan Government 1. to lift its economic blockade of Tamil Eelam forthwith; and 2. to immediately freeze all state sponsored colonisation of Tamil Eelam.

Udugampola affidavits & Sinhala opposition campaign

The Udugampola affidavits regarding Black Cats and killings continue to reverberate the Sri Lanka political firmament.

Secretary of the Opposition Parliamentary Group for the Protection of Human Rights, Mahinda Rakapakse, said that attempts were being made by his organisation to prevent the Udugampola affidavits before an international tribunal.

Opposition sources also said that a multi-party decision has been made to conduct an island-wide campaign as well as propaganda through posters on this issue. Opposition parties were particularly irked by the refusal of the government for a debate on the issue. The decision for this agitational campaign was taken on Thursday at a meeting chaired by the Leader of the Opposition, Sirima Bandaranaike. Representatives of the SLFP, LSSP, CP, TULF, and the MEP participated, sources said.

Inspired by the outcome of the walk (Pada Yatra) from Colombo to Kataragama, participant opposition parties are planning out to form a protest human chain from Colombo to Ratnapura in July. The parties include SLFP, LSSP, CP, MEP, NSSP and the DVJP (Desha Vimukthi Janatha Pakshaya). Meanwhile the same opposition parties had also decided to stage two forms of protest not witnessed in this country. Reports said that plans were afoot to stage a 'Sabdha Pooja' and 'Jana Gosha' island-wise at the same time. *(Courtesy: Sri Lanka Sunday Island, 10 May)*

Former Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke meets Eelam Tamil activists

Former Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke expressed his continuing concern for the Tamils in the North and East of Sri Lanka at a meeting with Eelam Tamil activists in Melbourne. The occasion was the Annual Labour Day Dinner on March 9. Mr.Bob Hawke received a standing ovation from more than 300 Australian Labour Party Members and delivered one of his first major speeches since he left office as Prime Minister. Mr.Hawke Picture shows Mr.Bob Hawke meeting with (l to r) Dr.Rajan Rasiah, Past President of the Ceylon Tamil Association (CTA) of Victoria, Professor C.J. Eliezer, Chairman of the Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations , Mr.T.Jeyakumar, President of the Tamil Coordinating Committee of Australia and Mr.K. Somasunderam, Past President of the CTA of Victoria.

Tail piece

"The relation between a society and its members' spirituality is reciprocal. A society's customs and laws, on the one hand, reflect the spirituality of its members. The spirituality of the members, on the other hand, is largely shaped by the nature of the society. This "largely" is never, however, "totally". In spite of arch modernist B. F. Skinner's denial of "freedom and dignity" we are not simply the products of our natural and social environments. We are, to be sure, deeply constituted by our relations to these environments. But in each moment, we create ourselves out of these relations in terms of our desires, purposes, meanings, and values—in short, out of our spirituality. Because of this element of autonomy, individuals are not only shaped by their society; they can shape it in return. In stating this twofold position—that individuals are internally constituted by their social relations, and that they are nevertheless not totally determined by them—I have already rejected a modern for a post-modern viewpoint." *David Ray Griffin in Spirituality and Society: Postmodern Visions*